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AUDREY H. MICHIE



Figure 1. Dropleaf dining table, mahogany with oak secondary, England, 1765-1770, HOA 28 $\frac{1}{4}$, WOA 36, DOA 44 $\frac{9}{16}$ open. The inked inscription "Tho. Woodin Charlestown" reveals that this table was imported to Charleston by the cabinetmaker Thomas Woodin, though it is not known whether Woodin imported for his own use or for resale. MESDA accession 3598.

An Assessment of English Furniture Imports Into Charleston, South Carolina, 1760-1800

M. ALLISON CARLL

Stylistically, eighteenth century Charleston furniture closely resembled what was being produced in London during that same period. These similarities can be attributed to a number of factors, including the immigration of cabinetmakers from London to the Low Country, the availability of English design books such as Chippendale's *Gentleman and Cabinet-maker's Director* and *The Universal System of Household Furniture* by William Ince and John Mayhew,¹ and the actual importation of English home furnishings which could serve as models for local craftsmen. Unfortunately, neither the immigration of British cabinetmakers nor the quantities of English furniture imported into the South have been studied extensively to date; the latter has long been a subject open to debate. It is this question, therefore, on which this article will focus in an attempt to assess the impact and amount of English furniture imported into Charleston, South Carolina between the years 1760-1800.

The enormous impact of the British style on all aspects of low-country architecture and the decorative arts cannot be denied. Commenting on Carolina society as a whole in the year 1779, Alexander Hewatt wrote:

Their intercourse and communication with Britain being easy and frequent, all novelties in fashion, dress and ornament are quickly introduced; and even the spirit of luxury and extravagance, too common in England, was beginning to creep into Carolina.²

Emigrant cabinetmakers such as Thomas Bradford and Charles Stewart were quick to point out their London connections.³ Cabinetmaker Richard Magrath advertised in 1771 that he was “‘Lately from London’”; two years later he continued to note that “‘from his Connection in *London*, [he] will always be supplied with the newest Fashions in his Branch.’” In October of that same year, Magrath indicated that he was “‘INTENDING to quit the Province, for a few months, early in the Spring, and go to *England*, in order to engage some experienced Workmen, who will enable him to turn out work not in the least inferior to the first Cabinet Shops in *London*.’” He reiterated in this same advertisement that those who “‘favour him with their Orders,” will be supplied “‘with any Piece of Cabinet-Work, on as good Terms as in *London*.’”⁴ During the second half of the eighteenth century, it was not uncommon to see a wide variety of goods advertised as being made in the “newest” or “latest” style, meaning that of England or the Continent.

Thus a degree of competition between imported goods and what was being produced locally becomes apparent. Some craftsmen, such as cabinetmaker and upholsterer Edward Weyman, advertised a predominance of imported goods although they certainly were capable of production in their own shops. In November, 1763, Weyman announced that he had “‘Just imported in the *Carolina-Packet*, Capt. *William White*, from *London*. . . . A very large and neat assortment of looking-glasses, the best ever imported into this province, consisting of mahogany and walnut chimney glasses, pier and sconce glasses of most sizes and fashions . . . mahogany and walnut scollop’d tea-boards and waiters, bottle boards, etc.’” He added that he could also quicksilver glasses and supply them to fit existing frames. Thomas Woodin, a carver and cabinetmaker, advertised in 1767 that he was selling “‘some curious mahogany work, viz. DESKS, and BOOK-CASES, with glass doors, ladies DRESSING-TABLES with all the necessary apparatus, Chinese Bamboo TEA-TABLES, and KITCHEN STANDS, &c.: all London make.’” Woodin, who is known to have been from London, further commented that he taught “‘DRAWING in all its Branches,” indicating that he was capable of producing design work himself and of transmitting these forms to the colonies.⁵

Chinese-style furniture, which Woodin referred to in his advertisement, had previously been introduced into Charleston. In 1761, cabinetmaker Peter Hall from London noted that patrons

could be supplied with “*Chinese* tables of all sorts, shelves, trays, chimney-pieces, brackets, &c. being at present the most elegant and admired fashion in *London*.” This is an obvious reference to furniture in the Chinese Rococo style which was popular in England during this period and is another of many examples of a style being transmitted by a cabinetmaker directly from England. Unlike Weyman and Woodin, however, Hall was not importing the goods but was producing them in his own shop. Perhaps a continuation of the Rococo style by cabinetmaker Richard Magrath eleven years later was his advertisement “SOPHAS, *French* Chairs, Conversation Stools, and Easy-Chairs, of the neatest Construction, such as were never offered for sale in this Province before.”⁶ In addition, another newer style in which Magrath may have worked was influenced by furnishings which some inhabitants of the Low Country imported directly for their own use. In 1772, he announced that he had a number of goods for sale “which he will engage to be as good as any imported from Europe”; in particular he noted that he made “carved Chairs, of the newest Fashion, splat Backs, with hollow Seats, and Commode Fronts, of the same Pattern as those imported by Peter Manigault, Esq. — He is now making some hollow seated Chairs, the Seats to take in and out, and nearly the Pattern of another Set of Chairs imported by the same Gentleman, which have a light, airy Look, and make the Sitting easy beyond Expression.”⁷ These chairs may well have been in the new “antique” or neoclassical style.

Despite the fact that a number of Charleston cabinetmakers were able to compete successfully with English imports, others were not so fortunate. Cabinetmaker John Carne provides one such example. In 1767 he advertised that “he hopes the public will give him encouragement (as he has lately met with very great losses in trade) so as to enable him to recover himself, and to satisfy the good friends he is indebted to”; he added that “the public may depend on having their work well done.” Whether Carne’s difficulties were due to the indifferent quality of his furnishings, the influx of imports, or too much local competition is unknown. The Revolutionary War years also spelled trouble for a number of previously successful cabinetmakers including Richard Magrath; in 1777 he was forced to advertise that he was “declining his business for want of materials.”⁸

Yet even the Revolutionary War could not break the inhabitants of South Carolina of their habit of relying on England for goods “in the latest fashion” as well as stylistic guidance. In

October, 1783, Joseph Lewis of London shipped a number of goods to esquire Thomas Hutchinson of Charleston, South Carolina. Included among these items were:

| <i>On board the Charleston Packet:</i> | <i>Sterling</i> |
|--|---------------------|
| 2 pier Glasses—gold & varnished Japan borders | £46.4.0 |
| 2 Girroroles with dolphins | 6.6.6 |
| 12 carved mahogany oval back chairs | 19.16.0 |
| 2 Inlaid card tables, banded, strung & thurm feet | 12.14.0 |
| 1 2 foot 6 inch inlaid pembroke table | 5.10.0 |
| A Sattin Wood Liquor case | 5.3.6 |
| A Lady's dressing table of mahogany, taper feet | 4.12.0 |
| 1 6 foot Wainscoat double screw'd bedstead, sattin wood posts . . . fine white fring'd lace petticoats vallance and bases | 69.12.0 |
| <i>On board the Emperor:</i> | |
| 12 Rich Carved Cabriole Mahogany chairs stuffed backs and seats | 77.17.6 |
| 2 6 foot Cabriole Sopha's | 44.0.0 ⁹ |

Several years later Thomas Bradford, "Upholder &c. from London," reported in the *Charleston Evening Gazette* that "he has imported from England, trimmings of the general approved taste of that country and best suited for the furniture used in this." Another indication that all imported goods were not always suitable for Charleston houses had appeared some years earlier. In 1766, cabinetmaker Peter Hall announced that he was selling "a Very neat and elegant Pair of SCONCE GLASSES, and one CHIMNEY GLASS, bought in LONDON . . . too large for the House they were intended for."¹⁰

Not surprisingly, following the Revolutionary War there was also an effort by some Low Country artisans to promote American manufactures. Edward Weyman, who had advertised a predominance of imported goods for sale in his cabinet and upholstery shop in 1763, now noted that he was "perfectly acquainted in the secret art and practice of plate glass grinding, rubbing, polishing, diamond cutting and silvering." He urged

those “who wish to encourage American Manufactures” to contact him.¹¹ Despite these efforts, the influx of foreign goods continued.



Figure 2. Windsor armchair, woods not recorded, England, 1760-1775, HOA 43¼, WOA 24½. A surprising British import to Charleston was Windsor chairs; this example descended in the Webb family of that city. One such example of Windsor importation was that of Nowell, Davies, & Ancrum of Charleston, who advertised in 1764 that they had: “just imported in the ship King-George . . . from LONDON . . . Windsor chairs. . . .” (South Carolina Gazette, 3 March 1764). MRF 9129.

Although eighteenth century newspapers provide evidence of the importation of English goods and of their stylistic importance, the basic question still remains. In what quantity were English furnishings imported into the Low Country? To view the problem from another angle, one might also ask: how much competition did Charleston cabinetmakers and upholsterers receive from English imports?

Some twentieth century writers have attempted to answer this question, although their comments reflect diverse points of view. On the one hand, Charleston historian E. Milby Burton suggested that "a comparatively small amount of English furniture was brought into Charleston." He cites as evidence the high cost of an imported piece as compared to one locally made; further, furniture was bulky in scale and cargo space was undoubtedly at a premium.¹² On the other hand, author John T. Kirk suggests that southerners purchased English-made furniture with some frequency. He notes that "because those who would naturally patronize superior cabinetmakers purchased abroad, comparatively little high-style furniture was made." In particular, Kirk claims that Charleston cabinetmakers were not really successful until after the Revolution, when a number migrated to the region from Philadelphia.¹³ It is important to note that these comments, which were made in the past, were based purely on speculation on the part of these authors and are not grounded in hard research of primary source materials.

Interestingly, a review of eighteenth century sources reveals equally conflicting opinions. In his reply to whether household goods could be found in Carolina, Johann Martin Bolzius wrote in 1751: "The fewer such space-requiring and breakable household goods one takes across the sea, the better it is. Everything is to be found here for reasonable money." Bolzius did note that paintings, rare china, and glass dishes should be brought from Europe and that "large mirrors are better bought in London."¹⁴

Other observers, however, indicated that only a limited number of goods were manufactured in the colony. On his list of items imported into South Carolina from England in 1761, Governor James Glen noted among other things, all types of cloth, laces, clothing, china, watches, household utensils, books, furniture, gunpowder, and medicines. Pelatiah Webster, who journeyed to Charleston in 1765, commented in his journal on May 27: "They . . . have very few mechanic arts of any sort, &

very great quantities of mechanic utensils are imported from England & the North^d Colonies." South Carolinian John Drayton corroborated Webster's observation in 1802 when he wrote that "so far as relates to manufactures in general, the inhabitants of this state find it more convenient to import them from foreign countries, than to produce them by their own labour."¹⁵ Again it must be noted that, although reflecting a contemporary point of view, these comments are equally unsubstantiated and those of Webster and Drayton, in particular, are obvious exaggerations. On the other hand, reports about colonial manufacturing to the Lords of Trade were often an underestimation.

Despite the fact that the quantity of imported goods remains unknown, it was sufficient to cause the South Carolina legislature to act. In 1782 a duty of 5 percent, *ad valorem*, was levied on all foreign goods with the exception of arms, ammunition, clothing, and salt. "For the encouragement and protection of manufactures," duties were raised in 1790 to 12-1/2 percent, *ad valorem*, on all chinaware, looking glasses and window glass, and 10 percent on earthenware, clocks, marble, slate, brick, and tiles. Cabinetwares, paper hangings, silver and plated ware, tin, pewter, and carpets were taxed at 7-1/2 percent, *ad valorem*. However, household furniture bought by people coming to reside in the United States was not subject to tax.¹⁶

Perhaps the best source presently available to the researcher attempting to assess the number of English furniture imports into South Carolina is the eighteenth century customs records published by the Public Records Office in London. Although often sketchy and incomplete, these records provide valuation rates for furniture exports from Britain to America and the West Indies from 1697 through the early years of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ In the earlier documents (1697-1780), exports from London and the British outports are listed separately; later records do not provide this breakdown. In addition, these records indicate only valuation rates and do not reveal quantities of goods exported.

Although these records are a valuable source of information, the statistics must be viewed with some caution for a number of reasons. The place to which the goods were shipped did not necessarily indicate the final destination. Further, the monetary worth of exports was averaged by multiplying the quantity of itemized goods by a fixed "official" price. Since furnishings were subject to a duty, many merchants attempted to underdeclare their value which suggests that some entries were fraudulent. Many

TABLE I: Exports of Cabinetworks and Upholstered Goods from London (L) and the Outports (O) to British Possessions, 1760-1770

| | Carolina | | Barbados | | New England | | Maryland & Virginia | |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | CW | UPH | CW | UPH | CW | UPH | CW | UPH |
| L 1760 | 70.0.0 24.0.0 | 80.0.0 | 598.0.0 373.0.0 | 452.0.0 | 160.0.0 | 470.0.0 | 92.0.0 | 180.0.0 1731.5.6 |
| L 1761 | 94.0.0 | 20.0.0 | 390.0.0 412.0.0 | 200.0.0 90.10.0 | | 140.0.0 | 137.0.0 | 30.0.0 2239.0.0 |
| L 1762 | 27.16.0 | 50.0.0 134.0.0 | 300.0.0 386.0.0 | 700.0.0 69.0.0 | 36.0.0 | 370.0.0 | 150.0.0 | 490.0.0 3570.5.0 |
| L 1763 | 10.0.0 | 74.10.0 129.0.0 | 268.0.0 165.0.0 | 26.10.0 376.16.0 | | 152.0.0 149.0.0 | 135.0.0 | 667.0.0 3013.7.0 |
| L 1764 | 330.0.0 | 180.0.0 41.16.0 | 32.0.0 195.0.0 | 710.4.0 | | 34.0.0 214.0.0 | 20.0.0 | 1737.0.0 1933.8.0 |
| L 1765 | 70.0.0 | 557.0.0 55.0.0 | 21.0.0 20.0.0 | 534.0.0 352.13.6 | | 495.0.0 64.0.0 | 18.0.0 | 315.0.0 212.0.0 |
| L 1766 | 350.0.0 66.0.0 | 800.0.0 207.10.0 | 215.0.0 231.0.0 | 122.0.0 871.10.0 | 20.0.0 | 425.0.0 178.3.4 | 8.0.0 | 532.0.0 1898.14.0 |
| L 1767 | 100.0.0 52.0.0 | 250.0.0 26.14.0 | 100.0.0 280.0.0 | 10.0.0 66.15.4 | 125.0.0 | 1180.0.0 42.10.0 | 27.0.0 | 440.0.0 2544.15.0 |
| L 1768 | 100.0.0 | 420.0.0 141.8.0 | 325.0.0 52.0.0 | 320.0.0 776.14.0 | 135.0.0 12.0.0 | 590.0.0 7.0.0 | 58.10.0 | 640.0.0 1423.18.0 |
| L 1769 | 10.0.0 12.0.0 | 810.0.0 64.0.0 | 115.0.0 5.0.0 | 1670.0.0 289.4.0 | 16.0.0 | 80.0.0 216.10.0 | 30.0.0 | 370.0.0 2647.8.0 |
| L 1770 | 20.0.0 | 230.0.0 65.0.0 | 300.0.0 | 208.0.0 333.5.0 | 130.0.0 | 320.0.0 30.0.0 | 120.0.0 | 690.0.0 2524.16.0 |

SOURCE: W. E. Minchinton, gen. ed., *Customs 3, 1696-1780: British Records Relating to America in Microform* (London: Public Records Office, 1974), vols. 60-70. All figures in pounds sterling. Compiled by the author from W. E. Minchinton's data.

customs officials were equally corrupt, again suggesting that some, if not many of the records, are incorrect. Research indicates that actual "Carolina" imports may have been as much as three to five times greater than the customs figures. In addition, the records do not take smuggling into account; the number of these goods may have represented 25 percent of the published figures.¹⁸ Finally, furniture taken out by colonial and foreign merchants, emigrants, American visitors, and sea captains among others would not be listed in these records. Historian E. T. Joy suggests that this "private" trade was probably greater than the "official" trade.¹⁹ Despite these problems, there is no reason to believe that the trade statistics are any more fraudulent for Carolina than any other colony, and overall they do provide a picture of the amount of furniture exported from England.

In an effort to determine if the Low Country received a larger number of imports than other colonial ports, the declared values of cabinetware and upholstered pieces shipped to Carolina, Barbados, New England, and the combined areas of Maryland and Virginia were recorded for the period from 1760-1800.²⁰ This time period was selected because it allowed analysis of the data for the years both prior to and following the Revolutionary War. The southern region has long been noted for its dependence on English stylistic trends, a factor no doubt encouraged by the strong economic ties between the two. Yet it was during the early years of this period that the Stamp Act and the Townshend Act were passed, and it was this increased taxation by the mother country which prompted the colonists to pursue home manufactures. The years from 1775 to 1785 were dominated by the Revolutionary War with South Carolina virtually under British control between 1779 and 1782. And as has been noted, the demand for British goods was not wholly diminished in the post-Revolutionary period — not just in South Carolina but in all of the regions under study. In examining the data for these four areas, one additional problem with the customs records must be mentioned. Up until 1787, goods bound for "Carolina" were intended for both North and South Carolina; thereafter exports to each state were listed separately. Thus the figures should be interpreted with this in mind.

In the early years of the period of investigation, 1760 to 1774, more upholstered goods and cabinetwares were shipped from Britain to Maryland and Virginia than to the other colonies, including the combined area of North and South Carolina.

TABLE II: Exports of Cabinetworks and Upholstered Goods from London (L) and the Outports (O) to British Possessions, 1771-1780

| | Carolina | | Barbados | | New England | | Maryland & Virginia | |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|-------------|---------|---------------------|----------|
| | CW | UPH | CW | UPH | CW | UPH | CW | UPH |
| 1771 L | 310.0.0 | 1985.0.0 | 430.0.0 | 123.5.0 | 10.0.0 | 280.0.0 | | 2241.0.0 |
| 1771 O | | 190.0.0 | 244.6.0 | 81.0.0 | 15.0.0 | 144.0.0 | 15.0.0 | 2077.0.0 |
| 1772 L | 10.0.0 | 230.0.0 | 215.0.0 | 261.0.0 | 10.0.0 | 100.0.0 | 10.0.0 | 1320.0.0 |
| 1772 O | | 145.0.0 | 66.0.0 | 242.6.0 | | 58.0.0 | 150.0.0 | 1486.9.0 |
| 1773 L | 95.0.0 | 180.0.0 | 200.0.0 | 760.0.0 | | 10.0.0 | 270.0.0 | 200.0.0 |
| 1773 O | | | 30.0.0 | 30.0.0 | | 3.9.0 | 35.0.0 | 1150.8.0 |
| 1774 L | 100.0.0 | 326.0.0 | 20.0.0 | 500.0.0 | | 250.0.0 | 50.0.0 | 533.0.0 |
| 1774 O | 15.0.0 | 109.15.0 | 594.0.0 | 115.0.0 | | | 115.0.0 | 957.0.0 |
| 1775 L | | | 50.0.0 | 230.0.0 | | | | |
| 1775 O | | 1135.0.0 | 466.0.0 | 45.0.0 | | | | |
| 1776 L | | | 2.0.0 | | | | | |
| 1776 O | | | 109.0.0 | 20.0.0 | | | | |
| 1777 L | | | | 900.0.0 | | | | |
| 1777 O | | | 170.0.0 | 45.0.0 | | | | |
| 1778 L | | | 23.0.0 | 5.0.0 | | | | |
| 1778 O | | | 5.0.0 | 100.0.0 | | | | |
| 1779 L | | | 25.0.0 | 905.0.0 | | | | |
| 1779 O | | | | | | | | |
| 1780 L | 117.0.0 | 242.0.0 | | | | | | |
| 1780 O | | | | | | | | |

SOURCE: W. E. Minchinton, gen. ed., *Customs 3, 1696-1780: British Records Relating to America in Microform* (London: Public Records Office, 1974), vols. 71-80. All figures in pounds sterling. Compiled by the author from W. E. Minchinton's data.

Specifically, shipments of goods to Maryland and Virginia had the highest declared value for fourteen of these fifteen years. In 1772, for example, cabinetware bound from London to Maryland and Virginia was valued at £10 sterling while upholstered goods were listed at £1320; cabinetware valued at £150 and upholstered goods worth £1486.9.0 were shipped to the region from the outports — that is, all the British ports outside London. In contrast, the figures for Carolina were £10 for cabinetware and £230 for upholstery sent from London; no cabinetwares were sent from the British outposts and the value of the upholstered goods totaled only £145. Throughout the entire period from 1760 to 1800, more upholstered furniture than cabinetware consistently was imported.²¹

By comparison, newspaper advertisements seen by the MESDA researchers do not support the finding that more cabinet goods were shipped into Maryland and Virginia than Charleston. Merchants' advertisements are, in fact, rare in this region. Thus a conflict between the two primary sources of information becomes apparent; the problem is compounded by the fact that goods imported by private individuals for use in their homes generally were not included in these official figures. Although useful, the customs records provide just one piece of the puzzle and leave many questions unanswered.

The customs data further reveal that the Revolutionary War years from 1775 to 1785 had a significant impact on British trade statistics. The earlier colonial boycotts against British goods brought about by the passage of the Stamp Act and Townshend Act had little effect on the importation of upholstered goods and cabinetwares (See Table I). However, between the years 1775 and 1782, no furnishings were reported to have been sent from Britain to either New England or Maryland or Virginia. Likewise, Carolina did not receive any exports from 1776 to 1779. Not surprisingly, Charleston was the only port in the four regions to receive goods from England during 1780 and 1781, these years coinciding with the British occupation of the province. Historian George McCowen notes that thirty vessels delivered British goods to Charleston during the first year of the occupation; during the second year the number was reduced to seventeen.²² In 1780, however, cabinetwares valued at only £117 and upholstery listed at £242 were imported from London. By the following year, the total import value of both cabinetwares and upholstery had risen to £2911.²³ Goods were exported from England to both Carolina

TABLE III: Exports of Cabinetworks to America and Barbados, 1781-1800

| | Carolina | Barbados | New England | Maryland & Virginia |
|------|----------|----------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1781 | 2911.0.0 | | | |
| 1782 | 800.0.0 | 554.0.0 | | |
| 1783 | 1065.0.0 | 678.0.0 | 1238.0.0 | 508.0.0 |
| 1784 | 2359.0.0 | 680.0.0 | 723.0.0 | 3330.10.0 |
| 1785 | 235.0.0 | 1040.0.0 | 360.0.0 | 727.14.0 |
| 1786 | 40.0.0 | 1126.0.0 | 930.0.0 | 1347.0.0 |
| 1787 | | 273.0.0 | 160.0.0 | 224.0.0 |

| | North Carolina | South Carolina | Barbados | New England | Maryland | Virginia |
|------|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------|----------|
| 1788 | | 47.0.0 | 438.0.0 | 110.0.0 | 300.0.0 | 19.0.0 |
| 1789 | | 72.0.0 | 280.0.0 | 255.0.0 | 50.0.0 | 25.0.0 |
| 1790 | | 45.0.0 | 516.13.4 | 25.0.0 | 49.0.0 | 110.0.0 |
| 1791 | | 68.0.0 | 136.13.4 | 483.0.0 | 50.0.0 | 280.8.0 |
| 1792 | | 240.12.0 | 595.16.8 | 272.0.0 | 254.0.0 | 446.10.0 |
| 1793 | | 37.0.0 | 568.10.0 | 310.0.0 | 95.18.0 | 66.6.0 |
| 1794 | | 55.0.0 | 336.3.4 | | | 248.13.4 |
| 1795 | | 20.0.0 | 734.0.0 | 450.10.0 | 10.0.0 | 473.0.0 |
| 1796 | 98.0.0 | 40.0.0 | 1758.16.0 | 212.0.0 | 427.0.0 | 689.4.0 |
| 1797 | | | 1178.16.0 | 40.0.0 | | 422.0.0 |
| 1798 | | 1155.5.0 | 3187.17.0 | 563.10.0 | 387.0.0 | 563.16.0 |
| 1799 | | 543.10.8 | 1502.14.3 | 968.10.4 | 309.16.0 | 330.0.8 |
| 1800 | 3.10.0 | 760.14.0 | 1839.5.6 | 1315.0.0 | 289.0.0 | 411.6.8 |

SOURCE: W. E. Minchinton, gen. ed., *Customs 17, 1772-1808* (London: Public Records Office, n.d.), vols. 7-22. Figures include exports from all British ports and are in pounds sterling. Compiled by the author from W. E. Minchinton's data.

and Barbados in 1782, and the following year all four regions once again were receiving shipments of cabinetwares and upholstery.

Post-Revolutionary trade statistics reveal that a majority of British furnishings imports were bound for the Caribbean. Furniture being shipped to Barbados had the highest valuation rate in thirteen of these fifteen years; one possible explanation for this may be due to the large number of Tories who fled the colonies during the war. In contrast, the declared value of cabinetwares and upholstery sent to the combined areas of North and South Carolina was consistently less than that for goods being exported to New England or the Maryland and Virginia region. Thus the customs data indicate that no more furniture was imported into South Carolina directly from England than into the other American regions studied, and in fact, the port of Charleston often received goods valued at less than those shipped to the Chesapeake. Quantities of furnishings imported into New England were certainly comparable to those being sent to the Low Country, and not less as one might expect.²⁴

Theoretically, the data suggest that Charleston cabinetmakers should have had no more competition from foreign goods than those craftsmen laboring in other areas of the country. What these statistics do not reveal, however, is the amount of English cabinetware and upholstered pieces which arrived in Charleston via the coastal trade after being assigned to the first port-of-call in the shipping records. Nor do these statistics take into account the amount of domestic furniture being imported in the coastal trade. While not directly within the scope of this article, it should be noted that venture furniture was brought into the port of Charleston with some regularity. In 1766, for example, an advertisement in the *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal* stated that chairs, desks, and tables were among the items brought in from Salem, Massachusetts, on board the *Brigantine Polly* to be sold on Colonel Beale's wharf. Some years later, Adam Gilchrist advertised the sale of New York furniture, including mahogany sideboards, bureaus, bookcases, desks, chests, tables, and Windsor chairs; and Richard Brennan offered Windsor chairs and settees from Philadelphia in 1798.²⁵ Echoing an opinion voiced by other scholars, decorative arts historian Kathleen M. Catalano claims that the southern states provided a ready market for the coastal trade because the "plantation economics of these regions had discouraged extensive craft development." In particular, she

suggests that "Philadelphia had figured prominently in the Southern furniture trade since the early 1790s."²⁶

Catalano's opinion, however, provides only a partial picture. The theory about "plantation economics" is valid but applies only in regions where urban centers failed to develop such as southeastern Virginia where the tobacco culture was predominant; coastwise shipping also dominated the trade in eastern North Carolina by the early nineteenth century. It is also true that many southern cabinetmakers could not compete with the expanding volume and cheapness of the northern cabinet trade, particularly from New York and Philadelphia. Charleston turner Andrew Redmond alluded to competition from the coastal trade in a 1784 advertisement when he stated that he made "Philadelphia Windsor Chairs, either armed or unarmed, as neat as any imported."²⁷ Yet the evidence seems to suggest that a number of Charleston cabinetmakers continued to thrive during the period under study, despite both foreign and domestic competition.

An examination of the Day Book of cabinetmaker Thomas Elfe, for example, reveals that between 1768 and 1775, he sold a total of 1,552 pieces of furniture to customers in the Low Country. Among Elfe's patrons were planters, merchants and factors, physicians, clergy, government officials, and other craftsmen. By varying his prices according to the design of the piece, Elfe was able to appeal to this broad spectrum of the population. A plain double chest-of-drawers, for example, cost £75-80 local currency. A pierced pediment increased the price by £5, and a fret cost an additional sum of £5. A plain mahogany bedstead could be purchased for £25-35; the price doubled for one with "Eagle claws and knees and casters," while bedsteads constructed of tulip popular ranged in price from only £5-16.²⁸

Additional data confirms that a sizeable number of Charleston cabinetmakers were doing more than just mending furniture, although this was certainly an important part of the craftsman's trade. Included among the duties which cabinetmaker John Watson performed for esquire Daniel Fludd in 1796 and 1797 were taking down and putting up a bedstead, "putting up pavilion Head & teaster cloths," and making a mattress, as well as constructing two mahogany chests-of-drawers, an inlaid secretary and wardrobe, a tea table, and twelve mahogany chairs.²⁹ Several years earlier, Dr. William Read had purchased furnishings from cabinetmaker Thomas Elfe, Jr., including a large wardrobe, a basin stand, a tea table and a dressing table, two mahogany bedsteads,

ten mahogany chairs, and two elbow chairs.³⁰

To date, the MESDA research program has yielded the names of 147 cabinetmakers working in Charleston and the surrounding area between the years 1760 and 1800 have been uncovered in research of the primary source materials. Likewise the number of Charleston upholsterers discovered thus far who were working during this same time period is 36. Thus, although the data indicates that a significant amount of furniture was imported from Britain into South Carolina during the last forty years of the eighteenth century, at the same time the Charleston cabinet-making trade was both large and healthy. Extant records confirm that these tradesmen were producing goods for a broad cross-section of the population, and were not reduced just to mending or furnishing the homes of the less wealthy.

The exact quantity of English furniture imports may never be known due to the sketchiness of the primary data, yet the impact of these goods was significant.³¹ On the one hand the number of imports, which included both casegoods and upholstered pieces, established a degree of competition for the local cabinetmaking trade. A number of tradesmen developed thriving businesses; others could not compete. On the other hand, these imports provided samples which local cabinetmakers could copy. Thus it was possible to continually offer goods "in the latest fashion," a factor of great importance to eighteenth-century residents of the Low Country.

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FOOTNOTES

1. These design books were offered for sale in the *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 18 July 1766. The third edition of Chippendale's *Director* was published in 1762; Ince and Mayhew's publication was issued between 1759 and 1763.
2. Alexander Hewatt, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia*, 2 vols. (1779; reprint ed., Spartanburg, SC: Reprint Co., 1971), 2:293-94.
3. *Charleston Evening Gazette*, 2 February 1786; *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 14 May 1795.
4. *South Carolina Gazette*, 8 August 1771, 10 May 1773, 11 October 1773; hereafter cited as *SCG*.
5. *SCG*, 12 November 1763, 29 June 1767.
6. *SCG*, 19 December 1761, 10 May 1773.
7. *SCG*, 9 July 1772.
8. *SCG*, 13 April 1767; *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, 21 July 1777.
9. Charleston District, Court of Common Pleas, Judgment Rolls, 1793, Roll #253 A. The shipment was guaranteed by Thomas Bourke; though delivery was made in 1783, the executors of Hutchinson's estate were taken to court ten years later for the continued failure to pay Lewis. The estate of Thomas Hutchinson, Sr., Esquire, was appraised in December 1791; he owned property in both Charleston and St. Andrew's Parish. In November 1791, the estate of Thomas Hutchinson, Jr. had also been appraised; he was listed as an esquire from St. Bartholomew's Parish and Charleston. See Charleston District, Inventory Book B, 1787-1793 [1776-1793], pp. 459, 403. All records are in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The description of several of the items suggests the emerging influence of the neoclassic style.
10. *Charleston Evening Gazette*, 22 February 1786; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, 16 September 1766.
11. *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 14 March 1789.
12. E. Milby Burton, *Charleston Furniture, 1700-1825* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 7-8. In his introduction to Wallace B. Gusler, *Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790* (Richmond: Virginia Museum, 1979), p. xviii, Sumpter Priddy III discounts similar claims that Virginia's wealthier families imported almost all of their furnishings.

13. John T. Kirk, *American Chairs: Queen Anne and Chippendale* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 58.
14. Klaus G. Loewald, Beverly Starika, and Paul S. Taylor trans., "Johann Martin Bolzious Answers a Questionnaire on Carolina and Georgia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d series, 14 (April, 1957): 247.
15. Chapman J. Milling, ed. *Colonial South Carolina: Two Contemporary Descriptions* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1951), pp. 53-55; T. P. Harrison, ed., *Journal of a Voyage to Charlestown in South Carolina by Pelatiah Webster in 1765* (Charleston: South Carolina Historical Society, 1898), p. 5; John Drayton, *A View of South Carolina, As Respects Her Natural and Civil Concerns* (1802; reprint ed., Spartanburg, SC: Reprint Co., 1972), pp. 149-50.
16. Thomas Cooper and David J. McCord, eds. *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, 10 vols. (Columbia, SC: A. S. Johnston, 1836-41), 4:512; *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 18 June 1789; Jacob Milligan, *The Charleston Directory and Revenue System of the United States* (Charleston: T. B. Bowen, 1790).
17. W. E. Minchinton, gen. ed., *Customs 3, 1696-1780: British Records Relating to America in Microform*, 80 vols. (London: Public Records Office, 1974); Walter Minchinton, gen. ed., *Customs 17, 1772-1808*, 30 vols. (London: Public Records Office, n.d.), mfm. All figures quoted are in pounds British sterling.
18. Minchinton, *Customs 3, Introduction*, vol. 1; T. S. Ashton, Foreword to *English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697-1808*, by Elizabeth B. Schumpeter (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), pp. 4-10; John Bivins, Jr., *Furniture of Coastal North Carolina 1700-1820* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, to be published in 1986). For an examination of furniture being smuggled into London from the Continent, see Geoffrey Wills, "Furniture Smuggling in Eighteenth-Century London," *Apollo*, 82 (August 1965): 112-17.
19. E. T. Joy, "The Overseas Trade in Furniture in the Eighteenth Century," *Furniture History*, 1 (1965): 1. An example of furniture being taken out of England by a private individual and which was probably not recorded by customs officials can be found in SCG, 9 July 1772.
20. Barbados, the first port of call for ships going to the West Indies, was prominent among the markets for furnishings exports. Joy suggests that only part of the cargo was actually unloaded there. Joy, "Overseas Trade," p. 5. New England was selected for comparison because many historians seem to believe that this region was self-sufficient in providing for its furniture needs while the South imported a majority of its home furnishings. Collection of data for Maryland and Virginia allowed for a comparison between southern regions.
21. Minchinton, *Customs 3, 1772*, vol. 72. In 1772, £10 of cabinetwares and £100 of upholstered goods were sent from London to New England, and £58 of upholstery was shipped from the outports. For Barbados, the figures were £215 for cabinetware and £261 for upholstered goods from London; the outports registered a shipment of cabinetware valued at £66 and £242.6.0 for upholstery. Thus goods bound for New England had the lowest declared value during that year. Symonds suggests that the term

- “upholstery” means both upholstered pieces plus the textiles used for that purpose. See R. W. Symonds, “The English Export Trade in Furniture to Colonial America,” *Antiques*, October, 1935, pp. 156-57.
22. George Smith McCowen, Jr., “The British Occupation of Charles Town, 1780-1782” (PhD. Dissertation, Emory University, 1967), p. 115.
 23. Minchinton, *Customs 3, 1780*, vol. 80; Minchinton, *Customs 17, 1781*, vol. 7.
 24. In the *Customs 17* series, officials began to list exports to Virginia and Maryland separately at the end of the eighteenth century. Despite variations in the method of recording the data, the conclusions reached remain valid. Joy examined furnishings being sent from London to Carolina, New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland and Virginia at five-year intervals from 1710 to 1750 and concluded that “the only two groups of colonies to which the exports were of any real significance and value were New England and Virginia and Maryland.” E. T. Joy, “English Furniture Exports to America,” *Antiques*, January, 1964, p. 94.
 25. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, 21 January 1766; *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 7 August 1789, 15 May 1798. See also Burton, *Charleston Furniture*, pp. 8-10.
 26. Kathleen M. Catalano, “Cabinetmaking in Philadelphia, 1820-1840: Transition from Craft to Industry,” in *American Furniture and Its Makers: Winterthur Portfolio 13*, ed. Ian M. G. Quimby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 82. Between 1820-1840, 299 boxes, 517 bundles, and 5,877 individual pieces of furniture were shipped from Philadelphia to Charleston. Catalano, “Cabinetmaking in Philadelphia,” p. 83.
 27. *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, 13 January 1784.
 28. John Christian Kolbe, “Thomas Elfe, Eighteenth Century Charleston Cabinetmaker” (M. A. Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1980), pp. 45-57; E. Milby Burton, “Thomas Elfe, Charleston Cabinet-Maker,” *Charleston Museum Leaflet No. 25* (Charleston: Charleston Museum, 1952), pp. 22-25; Kolbe, “Thomas Elfe,” p. 28.
 29. Charleston District, Court of Common Pleas, Judgment Rolls, 1799, #180A. In addition to constructing a large amount of furniture, Thomas Elfe's account book also contains 482 references to his mending furniture. Kolbe, “Thomas Elfe,” p. 43.
 30. Charleston District, Court of Common Pleas, Judgment Rolls, 1799, #838A.
 31. A number of English imports with long histories were noted during MESDA's field research in the Low Country; unfortunately, the number was not documented at that time.

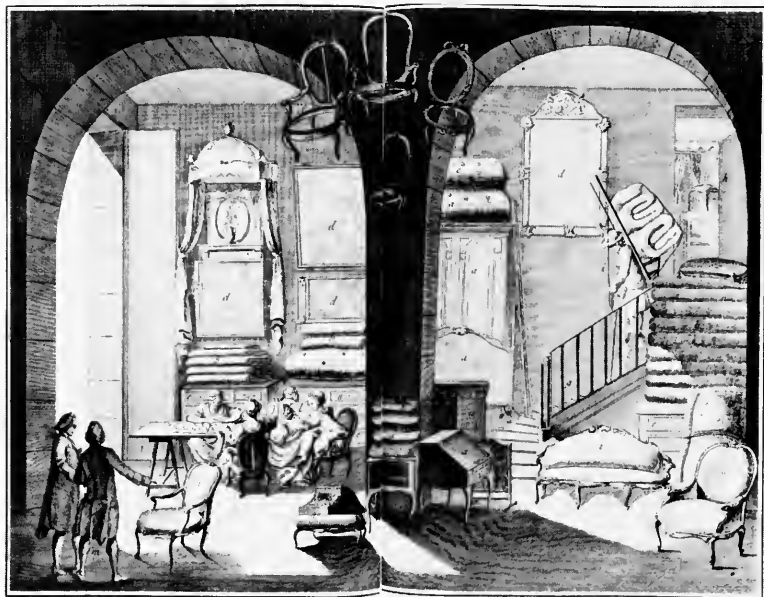


Figure 1. The interior of a Paris upholstery shop, from Denis Diderot's Encyclopedie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Metiers of 1751-1765. In this scene, women assistants are shown at work, while a workman enters at the right with mattresses. Tufting is evident on the mattresses on top the armoire in the center. A fire screen of the cheval type stands to the right of the central pillar, along with other articles of furniture ready for sale.

Charleston Upholstery in All Its Branches, 1725-1820

AUDREY MICHIE

On 2 February 1764 the inventory of John McQueen was taken in Charleston at "Mrs. McQueen's Dwelling House. This inventory represented the personal property of a wealthy merchant, taken at his city residence. There were some seventy-eight entries with a total value of £12,278; twenty-two of these could be classified under upholstery.* Six of these, "Mahogany Chairs with Leather Bottoms . . . Couch with Crimson Cover & Pillow . . . Mahogany Chairs with Yellow Silk Damask Bottoms . . . Settee Chair the Same . . . Easy Chair with Callico cover," and "Mahogany Chairs wt Crimson Damask (worsted) Seats," are easily recognizable as upholstered goods. Not generally known is the fact that during the period of McQueen's inventory, window curtains, bed curtains, and all the furnishings of a bed, both decorative and practical, were also the prerogative of the upholsterer. McQueen had two bedsteads which had curtains which matched the window curtains, one set of red printed linen, and the other set blue, and he owned a bedstead with purple "furniture," as the decorative furnishings were called. With these he had feather beds, mattresses, counterpanes, quilts, bolsters, pillows, sheets, pillow cases, and blankets. The upholstery trade encompassed much more than such work, however. McQueen's painted leather screen could have been either supplied or refurbished by an upholsterer. His Wilton carpet and his Scotch carpet might have been obtained through an upholstery shop. Possibly the two most unexpected entries that concerned upholstery were McQueen's riding chair and his half-ownership

**The entire inventory is listed in the Appendix at the close of this article.*

of a ship.¹ Coaches, carriages, and riding chairs were comfortably, and sometimes lavishly upholstered, as were masters' cabins on ships.

An upholsterer's work in the eighteenth century could be quite large in scope. It dealt with almost all the textile elements of an interior, with table linens and toweling representing the principal exceptions. In Charleston, the trade offered an even greater number of services. The importation of wallpaper and paperhanging was intertwined with the other advertised goods and services. Upholsterers were retailers and wholesalers of other kinds of goods. Along with general merchandise, a number of these goods were directly related to their trade, such as the importation of upholstery textiles and trimmings, hardware, brasses, casters, and sewing equipment. A popular import by upholsterers seems to have been looking glasses. In 1725, Robert Cambell's *London Tradesmen* described the upholsterer as one expected to have "not only judgment of material but taste in Fashions . . . skill in workmanship . . . and set up as a connoisseur in every article in the house."² Whether this goal was attained in Charleston cannot be stated with any certainty. What is possible, however, is an examination of advertisements and inventories for the evidence of upholstered objects and related work, in order to achieve a better understanding of this trade in the Low Country. Regional preferences for articles in the upholsterer's line in South Carolina should become apparent in the course of this study.

Upholsterers were originally known as "upholders" in England. Upholders in the thirteenth century were traders in small wares and second-hand goods, usually clothing and furniture, or makers and repairers of such things. Now obsolete, the meaning of the word uphold was "to repair." Upholders consorted with a more lowly group, the "fripperers," who sold goods clandestinely, usually at night. In the fourteenth century, the upholders became recognized as a separate mystery, and in 1465 they obtained a coat of arms. They had graduated to making bedding, furnishing funerals, and serving as appraisers. In 1626, the Upholders' Company of London was granted a charter by Charles I. One of their rights was that of conducting searches and confiscating fraudulent upholstery wares. In case of cushions, mattresses and other stuffed work, it was only too easy to mix illegal or undesirable trash in with legitimate fillings.³

The word "upholsterer," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, was in use by 1616. In eighteenth century England,

artisans still advertised themselves as either "upholsterer" or "upholder," or occasionally even "upholster." The earlier term was carried to South Carolina, but used there only upon occasion; in general, "upholsterer" was preferred. Upholsterer Joseph Fidler was called "upholder" in a 1733 mortgage record.⁴ In 1734, Robert Hunt, as an addendum to an advertisement for imports by the firm of Bennet and Hunt, announced that "the said Robert Hunt performs all sorts of Upholder's Business."⁵ Thomas Booden was identified as "upholder" in a mortgage of personal property in 1760.⁶ Thomas Bradford called himself "Upholder &c from London" in 1786.⁷ Even the term "upholster" crossed the ocean. J.F. Delorme, giving power of attorney to his brother-in-law, Michael Rame, let it be known that the latter would "follow the Upholster's business in his absence."⁸

It was in the seventeenth century that the art and practice of upholstery really became significant in Europe. Interest in architecturally-coordinated household interiors and in more comfortable furniture was a gradual evolution and an outgrowth of the Renaissance. Classical designs published in the sixteenth century in Europe were freely circulated, and showed the new taste. By the end of the sixteenth century, textile furnishings, which principally had been hung on walls or placed on wooden furniture, assumed a new role; it was now attached or fixed to chairs and other seating furniture. Quilting was used to prevent the stuffing from shifting around. By the end of the seventeenth century, "tufting" was beginning to replace this method in France. Tufting was a way of securing bulky upholstery by sewing through it at intervals and looping the sewing thread over tufts of linen on the surface.⁹ In seventeenth century France the court promoted textile manufactures of outstanding quality, and used some of them innovatively for interiors. By that time, France was the center of almost all European fashion.

England, once it had acquired the habit of looking across the Channel to see what was new, paid France the compliment of copying a great many of the new fashions, albeit with an English accent. It became *de riqueur* to match, in color if not in exact fabric, bed curtains, upholstered stools, and chairs in the same room, or coordinate the color scheme of wall hangings, chair covers, and curtains. In French, this was known as furnishing a room *en suite*. In English this was expressed by the derived word "suitable." In the eighteenth century this term continued as an expression of matching, and applied to upholstery materials,

wallpaper, and carpeting. A related expression, also popular in the eighteenth century, was "according to" which related to the French *en accord* or matching.

The influence of France on England was important not only to English interiors, but also to those of South Carolina. English taste in furnishings was transferred across the Atlantic, and along with this taste came French innovations. That is not to say that everything in England was French, not that the English did not translate and reinterpret much of it, but France was often in the background. South Carolina developed several other direct means of absorbing French taste, especially when it welcomed French Huguenot immigrants, and later in the eighteenth century, supported several upholsterers from France and the French West Indies. However, the most consistent French influence seems to have been that which had been an unconscious one, derived from the French influence on English work.

Records examined in the course of the MESDA documentary research program have yielded fifty-five individuals associated with upholstery work in Charleston; some of these were mattress makers. A geographical computer printout of these artisans is included here. It lists these artisans chronologically, noting dates and other trades in which they might have been engaged. A companion computer printout is available which is much longer, and provides more details regarding information contained in the MESDA master files. For this study, the geographical printout is felt to be sufficient. It has been modified somewhat, with an asterisk added to show the artisans who were primarily cabinet-makers, and the computer code numbers removed.

It can be seen by examining the printout that the Charleston sojourn of a number of the upholsterers was brief. Some, such as John Mason, advertised only once. After that he was located in Philadelphia¹⁰ and later Baltimore.¹¹ Abraham Maddocks appeared and then disappeared after publishing only two advertisements in 1773.¹² John Cooper, the year after he first advertised,¹³ was committed to prison for robbery in 1785, at the age of twenty-two.¹⁴ The estate inventory of Richard Bird, who had worked in New York, was taken in Charleston only two months after his arrival there.¹⁵ Walter Russell, who was one of the more active upholsterers on the list, had only three years to establish his reputation, having arrived in 1773;¹⁶ he died in 1776.¹⁷ John Linton was recorded as a passenger on a vessel sailing from Pennsylvania to Charleston in 1772, apparently making the voyage

| NAME/RECORD NUMBER | DATES | OTHER INFO |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Spoke, Jonas | 1733-1733 | |
| Fidler, Joseph | 1733-1742 | coach trimmer |
| Hunt, Robert | 1734-1734 | coach trimmer |
| Fowler, Samuel | 1737-1737 | coach or riding chairmaker |
| Rowland, Walter | 1741-1741 | |
| Caulton, Richard | 1742-1742 | coach trimmer |
| Lupton, William | 1743-1750 | *cabinetmaker |
| Elfe, Thomas (I) | 1745-1775 | *cabinetmaker |
| Bampffield, Elizabeth | 1751-1751 | needleworker |
| Weyman, Edward | 1755-1793 | cabinetmaker |
| | | coach trimmer |
| | | umbrella maker |
| Booden, Thomas | 1756-1763 | paperhanger |
| Hall, Peter | 1761-1767 | cabinetmaker |
| Bird, Richard | 1762-1762 | paperhanger |
| Weyman, Rebecca | 1762-1795 | |
| Weyman & Carns | 1764-1766 | cabinetmaker |
| Mason, John | 1764-1773 | paperhanger |
| Blott, John | 1764-1762 | paperhanger |
| Fowler, Richard | 1765-1774 | Venetian blind maker |
| Colman, Thomas | 1766-1769 | paperhanger |
| Hewer, Thomas | 1771-1771 | paperhanger |
| Burn, Andrew | 1771-1771 | *cabinetmaker |
| Magrath, Richard | 1771-1777 | *cabinetmaker |
| Smith, Solomon | 1772-1738 | chairmaker (seating) |
| Madocks, Abraham | 1773-1773 | cabinet warehouseman |
| Russell, Walter | 1773-1776 | paperhanger |
| Johnston, Darrow | 1774-1774 | paperhanger |
| Linton, John | 1774-1775 | Venetian blind maker |
| Fowler, Ann | 1775-1786 | paperhanger |
| Sass, Jacob | 1777-1807 | *cabinetmaker |
| Watson, John | 1782-1812 | cabinetmaker |
| | | Venetian blind maker |
| Cooper, John | 1784-1785 | painter |
| Alken, M. | 1785-1785 | paperhanger |
| Starnes, Daniel | 1785-1789 | carpenter |
| Watson, George | 1785-1791 | cabinetmaker |
| Bradford, Thomas | 1786-1797 | Venetian blind maker |
| | | paperhanger |
| | | cabinetmaker |
| Jones, William | 1787-1790 | *cabinetmaker |
| Wallace, Thomas | 1790-1810 | *cabinetmaker |
| Worthington, Joseph | 1793-1800 | cabinetmaker |
| Delorme, John Francis | 1793-1820 | paperhanger |
| | | cabinet warehouseman |
| Rame, Michael | 1795-1808 | |
| Calder, Alexander | 1796-1821 | *cabinetmaker |
| | | cabinet warehouseman |
| MacDonald, Duncan | 1797-1797 | |
| Smith, John | 1797-1822 | |
| Samoy, Claude Nicholas | 1797-1827 | |
| Erchouse, William | 1800-1810 | bandbox maker |
| Oliphant, Thomas | 1802-1818 | cabinet warehouseman |
| DuBois, Louis | 1802-1828 | paperhanger |
| Oliphant & Wilson | 1803-1803 | paperhanger |
| Oliphant, Calder & Co. | 1804-1806 | cabinetmaker |
| | | chair painter |
| | | bandbox maker |
| | | painter |
| Goubron, James | 1805-1806 | |
| Marc & Goubron | 1806-1806 | |
| Abbay, J.E. | 1806-1806 | painter |
| DuBois, Eleanor | 1806-1828 | paperhanger |
| Hattier, Joseph | 1807-1807 | |
| Piggott, Joseph | 1807-1807 | paperhanger |
| Watson, John, & Co. | 1809-1809 | *cabinetmaker |
| David, Charles | 1808-1813 | paperhanger |
| Austen, Catherine | 1811-1811 | |
| Valk, Francis | 1816-1816 | |
| Munro, Jeremiah | 1817-1819 | *cabinetmaker |
| May, John | 1817-1859 | *cabinetmaker |
| Utt, John | 1819-1819 | |
| Delorme, E. | 1819-1819 | |
| Delorme, William M. | 1819-1820 | |
| Ryckbosch, Temperance A. | 1819-1822 | |
| Francis, John | 1819-1822 | |
| Jones, Thomas C. | 1820-1820 | paperhanger |
| Wenger, I. | 1822-1822 | |
| Sheridan, J. J. | 1822-1822 | paperhanger |
| Wall, Francis | 1822-1822 | |

Figure 2. Database (computer) printout from the MESDA Guide to the Index of Early Southern Artists and Artisans, listing Charleston artisans associated with the upholstery trade.

south for his health.¹⁸ He returned to Charleston in 1774, placing two advertisements in April of that year.¹⁹ On 28 March 1775 he returned to Philadelphia.²⁰ Barrow Johnston arrived in the port with an assortment of upholstery goods from Liverpool, intending to follow the business. Nothing further is known about him.²¹ Upholsterers such as E. Delorme, William M. Delorme, John Francis, and Temperance A. Ryckbosch are known only through listings in a Charleston directory, although Mrs. Ryckbosch was found subsequently as administratrix of an estate, and by this means her first name was revealed. John Francis and Francis Wall were free blacks.²² Poor Thomas C. Jones' advertisement was published in the *Courier* for 8 January 1820, and his funeral was announced in the *City Gazette and Commercial Advertiser* in September of the same year.²³

Some of the names recorded may not have been serious practitioners of the trade. This did not apply to Mrs. Elizabeth Bampfield, who had a specialty: she made easy chair covers.²⁴ Mrs. Catherine Austen made mattresses, "colours" (flags) and servants' clothes.²⁵ Michael Rame advertised as a "Ladies and Gentlemens hair dresser."²⁶ He entered the upholstery business when upholsterer John Francis Delorme gave him power of attorney. He was later located on Sullivan's Island at the Summer Coffee House, where he dressed turtles for soup.²⁷ Another Frenchman, Claude Nicholas Samory, had a "Hair Powder Manufactory at the upper end of King Street."²⁸ By 1804 he was primarily a merchant or grocer,²⁹ and although he advertised mattresses in 1812, in the same advertisement he offered a "Few Dozen Smoaked Beef Tongues," and "6 Casks good old Bordeaux Claret."³⁰ He was listed as "mattress and bed maker" in Joseph Folker's *Charleston Directory* of 1813, as the proprietor of a "store" in 1819, and was operating an "upholstery store" in 1822. The least likely candidate for a working upholsterer was J.B. Ablay, formerly of Caen in France. He was recorded because of his partnership with James Goubbron, a paper-hanger, mattress maker, and band-box maker from Versailles. In 1806, both men ran off from Charleston to escape debts. Goubbron had not paid his rent, and the injured landlord let it be known that Ablay was a "chevalier d'industrie," a "deceitful scoundrel and unparalleled blackguard." Goubbron was characterized as one who "talks very loud and his conversation is obscene and vulgar; his manners disagreeable and is extremely dirty."³¹

Of the many Charleston upholsterers who claimed to be "from

London," four of these may have been actual members of the Upholders' Company of London. Listed in the Company records were:

Samuel Bowler, admitted by Servitude to the Upholders' Company 1731

Thomas Coleman, admitted by Servitude to the Upholders' Company 1733

Thomas Booden, son, admitted by Patrimony to the Upholders' Company 1750

Richard Fowler, admitted by Servitude to the Upholders' Company 1763

"By Servitude" indicated that the individual had served an apprenticeship, normally seven years. "By Patrimony" meant admission as the child born to a member. In Thomas Booden's case, his father had been admitted by servitude in 1720.³² Other men listed as members of the Upholders' Company who had names similar to Charleston upholsterers were Robert Hunt, 1731, and Barry Johnson, 1740.³³ Robert Hunt could have been the same man as the company member, since his advertisement mentioned the upholster's business, and he was in Charleston by 1734.³⁴ Charleston's "Barrow Johnston" might have been the son of "Barry Johnson." Such possible connections need further research, and may eventually unravel some of the mysteries of "lost" artisans on both sides of the Atlantic.

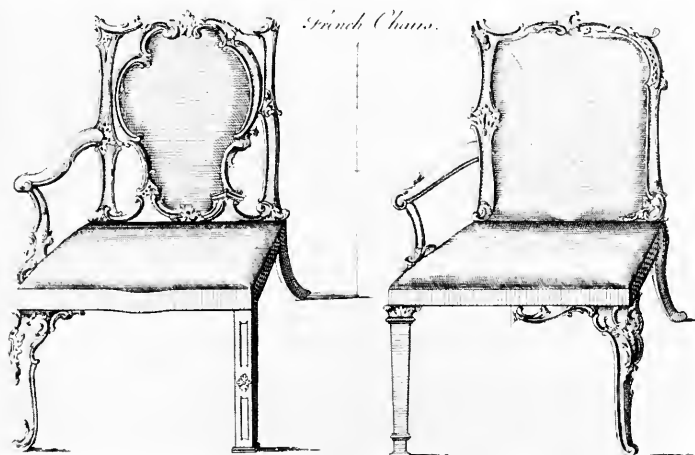


Figure 3. A plate illustrating "French Chairs" from *Genteel Household Furniture in the Present Taste*, London, 1764, revealing the English translation of the French Rococo style.

It should be noted that it was fashionable for tradesmen to represent themselves as having arrived "from London," but such claims were not always completely truthful. A substantial period of time occasionally separated actual departure from England and arrival in Charleston. During the interim, the artisan may have worked in other cities such as Philadelphia, where his advertisements also may have boasted a London origin. An artisan might have been born and trained in a remote part of England, merely using London as his port of departure. Other tradesmen claimed Paris as a place of origin, though in some instances the true origin may have been somewhere else in France or even the French West Indies. For example, John Francis Delorme billed himself as "from Paris," just as he had in Philadelphia in 1790.³⁵ he listed himself as a native of France when he took out his citizenship in 1793.³⁶ He was a highly respected member of the working fraternity in Charleston, and probably did spend time in Paris. He imported quantities of wallpaper from there. He seemed to have had contacts in the West Indies and with other members of the Charleston French community. His oldest daughter married Claude Samory in 1803.³⁷

It would seem natural for women to have had a place in the business of upholstery, but the more specialized aspects of stitchery were left to the men, at least from what is known of English practice. The Linnell shop in London allowed women as assistants, since assistants were not required to have served an apprenticeship.³⁸ Cutting out valances or counterpanes or stuffing furniture were expert skills, learned through training. In Charleston, Thomas Bradford took two girls as apprentices, Hester Turnier, who was about fourteen years old³⁹ and Bridget Carew, who was about thirteen.⁴⁰ John Francis Delorme, on the other hand, advertised that he was looking for two or three white seamstresses.⁴¹ These were two methods of obtaining workers. The apprenticeships at least held some promise for Hester and Bridget. No further records have been found for them. Bradford was dead by 1799,⁴² when Hester would have been twenty and capable of going out on her own, but Bridget would have been only eighteen.

Other Charleston upholsterers were joined in their work by their wives. Anne Fowler may be presumed to have worked with her husband while he was still alive, for after Richard Fowler's death, Anne advertised that she was continuing the business "in all its branches except paperhanging."⁴³ Edward Weyman's wife Rebecca was definitely a working upholsterer. The couple were



Figure 4. Portrait of the Charleston upholsterer Edward Weyman, 1775-1785, attributed to Thomas Coram. Oil on canvas, 29 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 24 $\frac{3}{8}$. Courtesy the Fellowship Society, Charleston. MRF S-9013.

married in Pennsylvania in 1751, before moving to Charleston around 1755; they had eleven children.⁴⁴ In 1762, Rebecca advertised that she “continued” her business, thus implying an earlier start. Her business included “making” all kinds of beds, or window-curtains, either festoon or otherwise, easy chairs for washing, &c.”⁴⁵ She apparently could wield her shears with the best of the men. She advertised that she worked together with upholsterer Thomas Coleman in 1767,⁴⁶ the year between the birth of two sons, Thomas in 1766, and Edward in 1768.

Edward Weyman began his advertising somewhat cautiously, if not a mite pompously. He flattered himself that he could “meet

with employ and encouragement from Gentlemen and Ladies of Carolina, sufficient to induce him to stay in the province.”⁴⁷ Pennsylvania-born, he chose to work “At the Sign of the Royal Bed,” and promised to produce work “as fashionable as in London.”⁴⁸ By the end of the 1750’s, he had embarked on an



Figure 5. Upholstery procedure, from Diderot. Although illustrating a chair in the French style, techniques shown here are applicable to British work, including the use of a webbing stretcher (“c” in the upper view) and the use of curled horsehair. The roll of stuffing at the front rail on the lower view was not used in England.

additional venture, that of both importing and making looking-glasses. He became increasingly involved in politics and civic activities. It may be that Rebecca was the more active of the two in upholstery work; she outlived Edward by two years, dying in 1795.⁴⁹

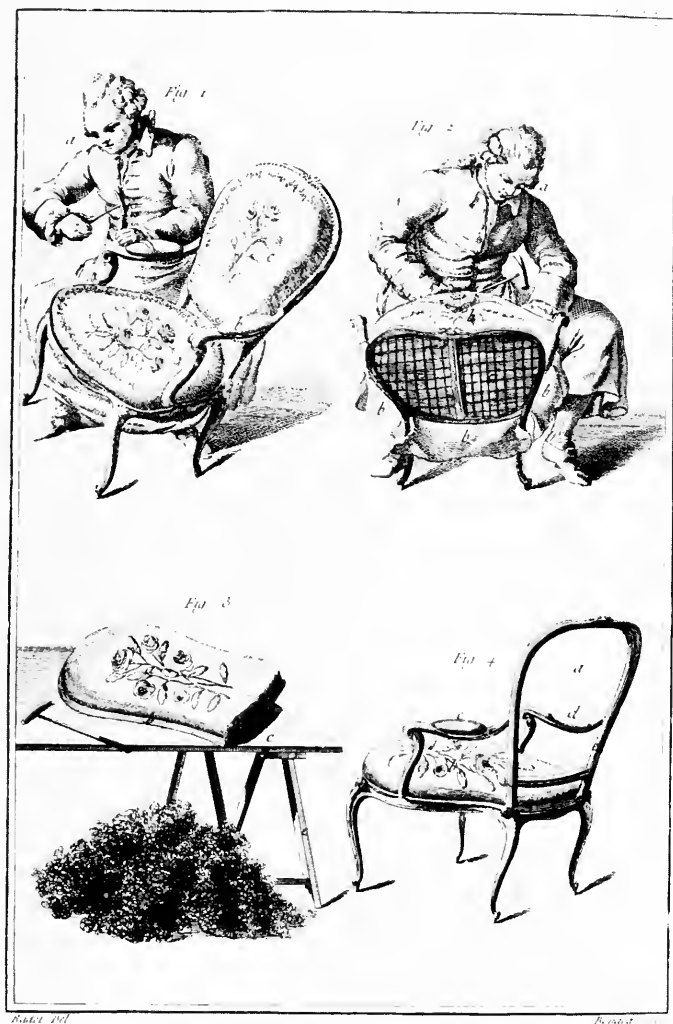


Figure 6. In this plate from Diderot, the workman in Fig. 1 punches holes for upholstery nails, while the workman on the right is stretching and tacking the fabric before the excess is trimmed and the upholstery nails driven in place.

A woman recorded as enjoying her husband's trust in the line of his work was Eleanor Dubois. She was married to Louis Dubois in 1803.⁵⁰ Dubois's will of 1827 made specific mention of his wife's trade involvement: "To his wife, he leaves his house and lot on Queen Street and gives her permission to carry on the business of upholster and paper hanger . . . If she decides to continue in his business, $\frac{1}{2}$ of the stock is to be retained for that purpose. If she does not decide to continue the business all his stock is to be sold. . . ."⁵¹ Dubois' inventory, taken June, 1828, and "exhibited by Mrs. Eleanor Dubois Executrix (in whose profession the same was) . . . " listed, among "Negro slaves": "Negro woman named Juliette with her Children in number 6 named Marianne, Margaret, Rose, Louisa, Paul, Joseph, and Carolina . . . these last mentioned . . . are given to Mrs. Dubois during her life to assist her support and to carry on the trade. . . ."⁵²

Quite naturally, a good deal of interaction existed between upholsterers and cabinetmakers. This was to be found as mutual work contracts, journeymen hired from the companion trade, and also in partnerships. Upholsterer Thomas Bradford and cabinetmaker Henry Clements formed a partnership in 1792, being "Sensible how essentially necessary both branches are to be together to render either of them complete." The firm was dissolved in 1793,⁵³ however. At some point in the eighteenth century, upholsterers and cabinetmakers began to use their labels in a rather broad fashion. Some upholsterers, for example, called themselves cabinetmakers, though in many cases that was not strictly true. Even more typically, cabinetmakers billed themselves as "upholsterers." John and George Watson had a cabinet warehouse, and then advertised separately at other times as both cabinetmaker and upholsterer.⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that Thomas Chippendale, who is so firmly entrenched in historians' minds as a cabinetmaker, was identified as an upholsterer in his will. One theory for this surprising description is that the upholstery trade was more lucrative then and this would have been a more elegant title.⁵⁵

Firms such as Chippendale's and that of William and John Linnell had special rooms in their London workshops given over to upholstery. More than this, Chippendale supplied almost any object for the household, and had, a separate "chair room," a "glass room," a room for carving and gilding, a stock of glass and china, and two feather rooms.⁵⁶ Upholstery in the Linnell workshops was spread among several rooms. There was a feather

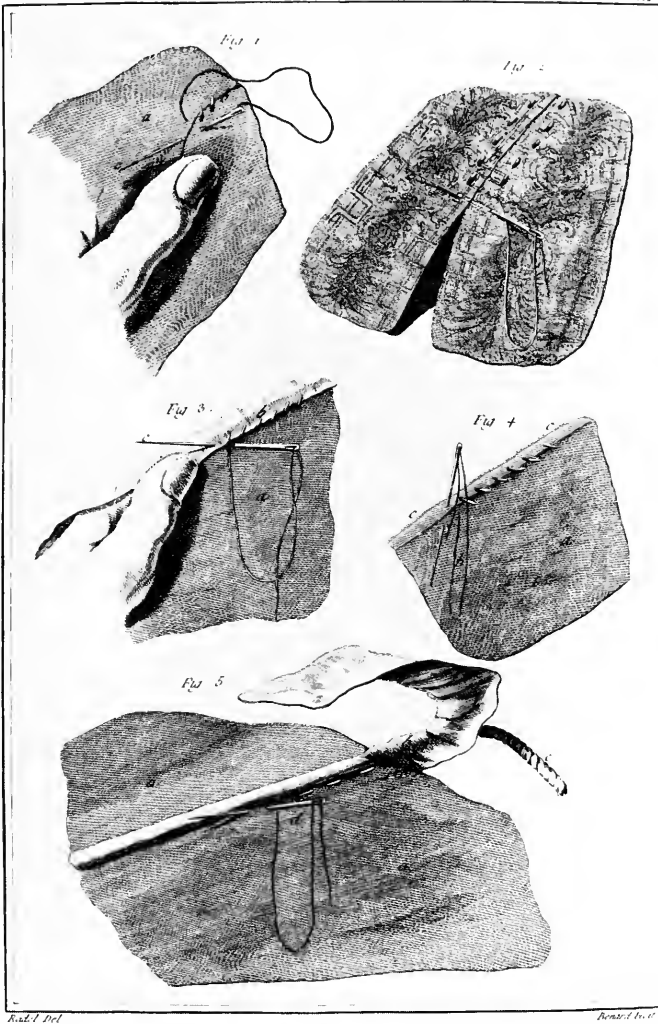


Figure 7. Upholstery stitches, from Diderot: Fig. 1, top stitching; Fig. 2, lacing stitch for joining carpeting; Fig. 3, joining two fabric edges with a ribbon trim; Fig. 4, the turned edge; Fig. 5, cording.

garret, where feathers were dried and pillows and mattresses were stuffed. The main upholstery shop was used for cutting and sewing, for storing the necessary textiles, quilts, blankets, and fringes, and for ironing work with the help of two "geese." The geese were presumably "tailor's geese," or heavy-duty irons. Green cloth for table tops was also stored in the main upholstery

room. The back upholstery shop was for bedsteads, and the middle shop for carpets.⁵⁷

Thomas Elfe, a cabinetmaker in Charleston, handled the upholstery side of his business in several ways. In 1751 he advertised that

Having now a very good upholsterer from London, [he] does all kinds of upholsterer work, in the best and newest manner, and at the most reasonable rates, viz. tapestry, damask, stuff, chints or paper hangings for rooms; beds after the newest fashion and so that they may be taken off to be washed without inconvenience or damage; all sorts of festoons and window curtains to draw up, and pulley rod curtains, chairs stuffed cover'd tight or loose; cases for ditto⁵⁸

The upholsterer to whom Elfe referred may have been Thomas Booden, though this is speculation based on Booden's dates in Charleston, and on his evident ability to hang wallpaper. Elfe's account book, covering the years 1768-1775, mentioned seven upholsterers by name: John Blott, Richard Fowler, Walter Russell, Abraham Maddocks, Charles Allen, S. [Solomon?] Smith, and Thomas Hewer. Some of these individuals did work for Elfe, some ordered from him, and some were listed in other financial transactions. Blott rented tenements from Elfe, and Russell lodged at Elfe's house when he first arrived.⁵⁹ Routine work was often handled by Elfe's own workmen or skilled slaves. Two cabinet-makers paid for upholstery work were Richard Magrath and Andrew Burn.

Thomas Elfe's accounts are at present the best source for understanding day-to-day upholstery work in eighteenth century Charleston. They do not include paperhanging; Elfe may have abandoned this after the first venture. There was one entry for "putting up tapestry" or wallhanging for John Drayton.⁶⁰ Some of the entries which mention stuffing and covering furniture reveal interesting glimpses into fashions in fabrics in the 1770's, and prices they entailed. Twelve chair seats covered for John Drayton cost £3.15.0, using eight and a half yards of damask at 17/6 a yard.⁶¹ Hair seating was the most frequently-mentioned covering fabric. It took six and a half yards at 20/- a yard to cover a set of twelve chairs,⁶² and four yards at 35/- for a couch seat.⁶³ Most of the chairs were "stuffed over the rails" and "brass

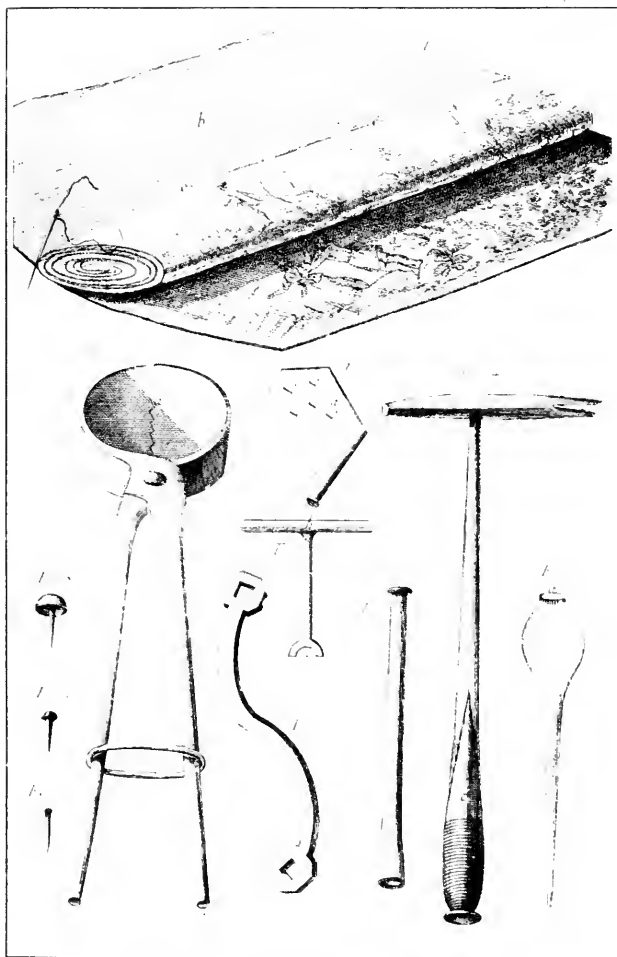


Figure 8. Upholsterers' tools from Diderot, illustrating first a lining stitch (Fig. 1e), then a webbing stretcher (Fig. 2), an unidentified tool, possibly a tack puller (Fig. 3), a tack hammer (Fig. 4), unidentified, possibly an upholstery nail puller (Fig. 5), bed wrench (Fig. 6), a "foil," used for driving home upholstery nails without marring the heads (Fig. 7), a brass upholstery nail with gilt finish (Fig. 8), an awl for punching pilot holes for the nails (Fig. 9), a wrought-iron tack (Fig. 10) and a copper "pin" tack (Fig. 11).

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nailed." "Brass nailing" was the expression used for finishing off the edges of upholstery, such as on the outside of chair rails, with a trim of large-headed nails. In Britain, upholstery nails were



Figure 9. Charleston easy chair, mahogany, ash, and cypress, 1745-1760, HOA 45 $\frac{3}{4}$, WOA 31 $\frac{1}{2}$, DOA 29. The frame reveals several sets of tack holes which indicates several changes in upholstery; the lack of early holes in the lower frame indicates that no upholstery nails were used in the first upholstery. The sacking represents at least a second replacement. MESDA accession 2788-2.

polished and often coated with a gold varnish. In France, as Diderot illustrates in his *Encyclopedia*, some nail heads were actually fire-gilded rather than solid brass. Before they were set in the wood, holes were punched to receive them. The heads were protected from direct hammering by an intermediary tool, a "foil," which took the blows of the hammer.⁶⁴ "Hair" cloth, which was woven with horse hair and either wool, linen, or cotton, was not always a uniform and grim black. It was produced in

several plain colors, or woven in a pattern, sometimes with stripes, and had an elegant satin-like finish.⁶⁵



Figure 10. Two yellow satin chair seat covers, with the tapes used to tie them in place. Courtesy the Charleston Museum.

Worsted damask and loose check covers were listed for other seating furniture. The check covers were as fashionable for sofas as they were for easy chairs, French chairs, and couches. Elfe provided stools covered simply in canvas, probably intended for subsequent embroidery.⁶⁶ His sofas were particularly expensive, usually £80 or £100, not including their bolsters, which were charged separately. The cost of a sofa lay primarily in the elaborateness of the covering fabric. In 1771, Alexander Wright was charged £90 for a sofa, and £6 for the two bolsters.⁶⁷ In the same year, under Elfe's shop accounts, "Mills" was paid £8 for making a sofa,⁶⁸ reflecting relative labor costs. Underpinning materials mentioned among the accounts were girth webbing, oznaburgh (a stout linen), and moss. For gaming table or desk tops, green cloth or baize were recorded.⁶⁹

An idea of the sort of seating furniture being stuffed can be gathered from the upholsterers and what they advertised, as the following excerpts from advertisements illustrate:

1741—" . . . chairs cover'd, stuffed and Cases made accordingly, chamber chairs, easy chairs, Settee pews lined. . . ." (Walter Rowland)

- 1756—" . . . stuffs all kinds of settees and settee beds, easy chairs, couches. . . ." (Edward Weyman)
- 1762—" . . . sophas, settees and commodes, easy chairs covered and nailed of loose cases for washing. . . ." (Richard Bird)
- 1765—" . . . For an easy chair cover £3 For a French chair cover £3. . . ." (John Mason)
- 1772—"Continues to make, cover and stuff Sofas, Easy Chairs, French Elbow Ditto, Nail over Ditto, false seats. . . ." (John Blott)
- 1773—" . . . Sophas, Couches, Conversation Stools, French and Easy Chairs, stuffed and covered in the best and neatest manner. . . ." (Abraham Maddocks)
- 1786—" . . . All kinds of cabriole Chairs and sofas parlour Chairs if ordered. . . ." (Thomas Bradford)⁷⁰

Screens and window blinds, including Venetian blinds, were provided by Elfe. It may be remembered that John McQueen had a large leather painted screen. Thomas Shiffel received a seven-leaf screen from Elfe.⁷¹ In France, these standing screens were given a separate identity from fire screens, even though this was not the case in England. Standing screens had three or more leaves. Judging from Charleston advertisements, popular decoration for such screens included wallpaper, maps, and prints. Fire screens were for the protection of those drawing near a hot fire. The two principle varieties, pole screens and cheval screens, were often elegantly decorated with fine fabrics, tapestry or embroidery. Fire screens were also covered with wallpaper. Thomas Elfe lined a fire screen in silk for John Cogdell in 1774.⁷² Another piece of chimney furniture, fitted into the fireplace opening during warm months, was the chimney board. Chimney boards were decorated with wallpaper or painted. Elfe fitted a chimney board frame for Brian Cape in 1772.⁷³ Paperhangers sometimes used a wallpaper border as a frame,⁷⁴ but this was probably on an ordinary wooden frame.

Elfe's window blinds were made of mahogany and green canvas. Sabina Elliott's order was for "12 window blinds a 15/ To 1000 tin tacks, 15/ 2 doz Brass hooks 35/ To 12 Buttons & Screws, &c .15." ⁷⁵ These may or may not have been canvas, although the tin tacks make that sound plausible. "3 Window Blinds of Mahogany Canvas with brass hooks a 70/ ea" for Charles Coatesworth Pinckney in January, 1774, leave no doubt of the



Figure 11. Portrait of James Hutson of Charleston by James Earl, ca. 1796, oil on canvas, approximately 48 x 40. The upholstery of the armchair, while not as tight as that expected on a chair of the period, shows close-nailing of the rails, arms, and back. Courtesy of the City of Charleston. MRF S-8516.

material.⁷⁶ Window blinds were primarily used as sun screens, and quite often covered only the lower part of the window. Some were simple frames with canvas tacked to them. Their seventeenth century predecessors were sashes, stretched with thin fabric or paper made translucent by soaking them in oil or turpentine.⁷⁷ Spring blinds and roller blinds also existed in Elfe's period.

All these contrivances were intended more for filtering out light than with providing ventilation. Venetian blinds were described by upholsterer John Blott as being useful "for keeping rooms cool, by admitting the air, and Keeping out the sun."⁷⁸



Figure 12. Detail from the trade card of the Higgs cabinet manufactory in London, working 1802-1839, illustrating a bedstead with an arched tester, fringed valance, and four curtains; also shown on the left is the installation of a Venetian blind, and on the right a window fitted with festoon curtain and a pair of blinds in the lower half. From Sir Ambrose Heal, *London Furniture Makers* (London: Batsford, 1953), p. 76.

In the twentieth century, Venetian blinds are often used with the windows shut, but this early reference adds a different perspective to their use, and a very necessary one in South Carolina where every summer breeze had to be courted.

Perhaps the Elfe entry “two Venetian window larths and pullies” charged to John Blott should be examined.⁷⁹ This should not be confused with either a Venetian blind or Venetian curtains. The lathe and pullies were for curtains to be made for a Venetian window, or what is known as a Palladian window in the twentieth century. It consisted of an arched central window flanked by two rectangular windows. Thomas Chippendale illustrated a fixed drapery with his “Design for a Cornice for a Venetian window” in the 1762 edition of the *Director*.⁸⁰ Blott previously had purchased a “compass window larthe & Pullys” from Elfe; the “compass” or curved lath may have meant that he was planning to hang a bay window, an ambitious attempt.⁸¹ There are no known windows of this type surviving from eighteenth century Charleston.

References such as these imply elegant interiors furnished for wealthy clients. One of Elfe’s commissions for Egerton Leigh was

to mend some painted window cornices and "five pullies put to a lathe."⁸² Pullies were the small spools around which cords travelled for the successful raising and lowering of the curtain. Elfe's pullies were generally mahogany. Egerton Leigh's curtains were probably very elaborate; They may have been among the 1774 "Furniture" to be sold at auction at Egerton Leigh's house, which included

. . . elegant white and gold cabriole sophas and chairs, covered with blue and white silk, Window Curtains to Match; one other set of Sophas and Chairs, covered with black and yellow Figures of Nun's Work in Silk. . . several suits of handsome Chints Cotton window curtains and ornamented with silk Fringe Tassels. . . .⁸³

Mending and altering was a way of life for the eighteenth century artisan. In the Chippendale and Linnell firms there was constant activity in moving, putting up, and taking down beds, as well as taking up and putting down carpets, cleaning, altering, and refurbishing window curtains. Elfe's account book listed time spent in such work and possibly other tasks by slaves and white workmen:

Negroe Paul to do 1½ days work at Peter Valton . . .
moving and putting up Bedsteads £1.10.
½ days work for 2 Negroes 30/ to hanging two glasses
4 days work of my Jack for David Olyphant.
½ days work of Jack mending sundries & taking down
bedsteads 1.10 2 days work of one fellow Jack 30/—
½ days work Jack 15/—
1 days work 2 Negroes taking down furniture Tho. Pepoe
£2.10.0
5½ da. work 1 white man @40/, 4½ da. do. do. 1 Negroe
@25/-.⁸⁴

An amazingly frequent service listed in Elfe's accounts was that of taking down and putting up bedsteads. At times the accounts tied this in with mending tester laths, adjusting pullies, replacing pins or bed screws, tightening sacking and cords, adding casters, and other similar tasks. Such work could represent changes between summer and winter bed furniture, especially in cases where the hangings had to be put up professionally and tacked

into place. The accounts themselves show no seasonal pattern, however. It is possible that beds often were simply stored. Housekeeping habits might have dictated this as a sensible way of dealing with both cleaning and insects. Other activities indicate that Elfe's men periodically helped to open or close a house. They also took down and put up looking glasses, shelves, provided crates, and packed up window curtains and pieces of furniture.

| | 1768 | 1769 | 1770 | 1771 | 1772 | 1773 | 1774 | 1775 |
|-----------|------|------|------|-----------------|---------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| JANUARY | | | | | •• | ••• | • | •• |
| FEBRUARY | | | | | ••• | | | •••• |
| MARCH | • | | | | •• | •••• | ••••••• | • |
| APRIL | | | | | •••• | • | ••• | ••• |
| MAY | | | | ••••••• | ••••••• | •• | •• | ••••••• ••• |
| JUNE | | | | •••• | •••• | ••••••• | • | •• |
| JULY | | | | •• | • | ••• | •• | •••••• |
| AUGUST | | | | •• | ••• | •• | •••• | • |
| SEPTEMBER | | | | •••• | | • | | •••••• |
| OCTOBER | | | | ••••••• •••• | •••••• | • | | ••••• |
| NOVEMBER | | | | • | ••••••• •• | •••• | | •••••• |
| DECEMBER | | | | •••• | ••• | | ••• | |

Figure 13. Table compiled by the author, showing monthly entries in the Thomas Elfe Account Book for beds taken down or put up.

A variety of different kinds of beds were in use in the eighteenth century in Charleston. Thomas Booden advertised state beds when he first arrived in Charleston in 1756⁸⁵, but this item was soon dropped. State beds were well beyond the purse or aspirations of most householders in England, and were almost more regarded as wonders than objects to emulate. Most of their expense lay in the elaborateness and richness of their textile furnishings. State beds were probably familiar to Charleston citizens who owned design books, since they were lovingly and imaginatively illustrated in such sources. Another means by which Charlestonians may have been exposed to state beds was through visits to the British Isles, where they may have joined pilgrimages



Figure 14. English green silk fabric, brocaded in a floral pattern in white, brown, and purple, ca. 1736-1740. The document is lined with plain green silk. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.

to country houses. Several English characters in Jane Austen's novels of the early nineteenth century did just that. Even in the eighteenth century, some state beds had been standing *in situ* for more than a century, as indeed some still are, luckily, in the twentieth.

Forms of beds (see Figs. 20, 23) mentioned in South Carolina inventories included post beds, low post beds, field and camp beds, tent beds, trundle beds, couches, turn-up bedsteads, chair beds, box beds, settee beds, cribs, cradles, and cot beds. The evidence of beds with suspended testers rests on such advertisements as Edward Weyman, who made "... raised teater [sic] beds with scoloped head cloths, either scroll'd work plain four post beds full trim'd or plain. . . ." ⁸⁶ There are many undescribed bedsteads, some of which could have been examples with the tester

suspended at the foot from the ceiling and fastened to the wall at the head, or half-testers that only covered the upper half of the bed.

Research is on firmer ground with field beds and camp beds, both of which seem to have been common in South Carolina. They were beds that easily could be set up and dismantled. Chair beds were one of the ingenious contrivances characteristic of the mechanically-minded eighteenth century. They resembled chairs in the day and folded out into beds at night. Other folding beds were fitted into sham chests-of-drawers or hidden inside settees. "Turn-up" beds were hinged at the foot, allowing them to rise vertically so that they might be pushed against the wall, to be hidden by a curtain. In the instance of "turn-up" beds hidden behind a door, the door may have been used as a tester, which was propped up by two rods at the foot. Couches were a type of daybed, although this term is somewhat confusing. A couch could also be a couch-bed, set with one side to the wall and provided with a canopy and curtains. The European box bed was a bed built into the wall. Inventories indicate the presence of such beds in Charleston, though they may have taken a different form. A "cott" was defined by Thomas Sheraton in his 1803 *The Cabinet Dictionary*, as a

. . . sort of bed used at sea, and formed of canvas, sewed together in the shape of a chest, and is about 6 feet long, 2 feet broad, 1 foot deep. The bottom is made of a wood frame, and strained with canvas; the whole being suspended by cords to some of the beams of the ship; it swings, and gives way to the motion of the sea.⁸⁷

If this describes any of the cots used in South Carolina, then it was akin to another sleeping contrivance, the hammock. Many "cotton hammocks" were to be found in inventories, and were used not just by seafaring or military gentlemen, but were also strung up by South Carolinians. Hammocks kept the sleeper off the floor, well away from night marauders such as cockroaches. A porch or piazza provided a cool place for a hammock. To protect the sleeper from attack from the air, they were covered over with mosquito nets, as were cots.

Canvas or sacking "bottoms" supported beds and mattresses on a bedstead. Sacking bottoms had eyelet holes on their outside edges, and cords were passed through these to be wound



Figure 15. Linen document of the late eighteenth century, block printed in a sprig pattern in red and black. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.

around pins fitted into holes in the rabbets cut in each bed rail.⁸⁸ Another method called for simply tacking the canvas sacking into the rabbets, and then tightly lacing the canvas together with a rope which crossed the bed opening in a serpentine manner. In England, the sacking edges were reinforced with leather binding. Sacking bottoms frequently had to be re-stretched, tightened, or replaced. The same was true of rope bottoms, which were used directly under a firm mattress, or with a mat laid on top of them, the mat fastened to the corners of the bed. For James Drummond, Elfe provided “4 knobs for matts” along with two ash bedposts, presumably for this use.⁸⁹ “Skins” (deerskins) or hides occasionally

were used over ropes in South Carolina. Thomas Elfe's accounts mentioned many sacking bottoms and rope bottoms. He also dealt with "larthe bottoms" which, by the 1770's, were an alternate arrangement. These were slats placed across the bed at intervals. In England, these were used on the more expensive beds after 1750.⁹⁰ In Charleston, both sacking and slats were used for high post bedsteads and field beds. Slats were commented upon by visitor Ebenezer Kellogg in 1817:

. . . instead of sacking or even ropes, boards five inches wide, and at intervals of about the same width were laid from side to side. On these was laid a mattress, which seemed to me quite as hard as the boards. This is the common way of fitting bedsteads here, but instead of a mattress, a feather bed is frequently used, and is commonly laid for strangers. A mattress and feather bed are often both used, but then the mattress is laid upon the bed.⁹¹

Extant eighteenth and early nineteenth century Charleston bedsteads examined by the MESDA research staff have been of the type intended for slats, the rails cut at intervals with open mortises.⁹²

Not every householder owned a bedstead; some merely used a "bed." This meant a large sack, usually made of ticking, and stuffed with feathers or some other filling. That the term "bed" was often expanded to include the bedstead or even to a fully-furnished bedstead creates confusion in the interpretation of inventories. A boon to the researcher certainly would have been a precise evolution of the definition of "bed" so that "bed and furniture" before a certain date referred only to mattress and ticking, and after that date, the complete bedstead. Instead, the description depended upon who was taking the inventory, and how much emphasis was placed upon separate bedding items. The majority of South Carolina inventories seem to have been listed in detail. One fact is apparent: feather beds were valuable items. Even a seemingly poor "feather bed naked," listed at £15, was high in value if compared to "2 beds mattress bolster quilt bedstead, &c. £35."⁹³

In some areas of the European continent, feather beds were used as "eiderdowns," known today as "down comforters." English custom called for placing the bed on top of a mattress, and this seemed to have been the case as well in South Carolina.

The same fillings were used for either beds or mattresses: feathers of various grades ranging from swans down and eider down to goose down and ordinary feathers. Also used were wool clippings, straw, curled horsehair, and cotton. Both beds and mattresses made of striped or checked ticking, a firm fabric very tightly woven to encase feathers. Occasionally, other materials were used, such as leather casings for mattresses. Mattresses, before the advent of innersprings around 1829, were probably firmer versions of feather beds. They were tufted, just as some upholstery was, but gradually the linen tufts were replaced by buttons, which were more suitable to very thick stuffing.⁹⁴

In South Carolina, a native filling for beds, mattresses and upholstery work was moss. This filling was described by a French visitor:

To several trees adheres a yellow grey moss which hangs several feet down like a beard, and is known by the name Spanish beard. It retains the same colour, both in winter and summer, and bears small blue flowers in the spring. It clings especially to oaks and elms . . . In gardens which are well kept, it is taken off with iron rakes; the negroes frequently pull it off the trees in the woods with their hands, and sell it to the upholsterers of Charleston, who stuff with it mattresses and chairs. For the same purpose, pretty large quantities of it are transmitted to Philadelphia, New York, and even to the northern states; for though it constantly preserves a certain unpleasant smell, yet it is much used, from its being cheaper than wool or hair.⁹⁵

A Scots traveller observing the moss during his 1810-1811 visit to South Carolina, added to the understanding of its use:

It undergoes a preparation however, previous to its being made use of. They bury it underground untill the niter bark of the fibre which is soft and damp rots away, and when it is taken up and washed it has exactly the resemblance of horse hair and makes a very comfortable mattress.⁹⁶

Mattresses and beds, bolsters, and pillows were imported as finished products as well as made in South Carolina. Bolsters were made the full width of the bed, and generally were used with

two pillows. Upholsterers in Charleston vied with the imports. In 1772, John Blott assured the public that he “makes and sells, better and cheaper than can be imported, for Cash, Feather Beds, Bolsters and Pillows, Mattresses, etc.” In 1766, Blott had advised his patrons that they could have mattresses “done cheap” if they supplied their own material.⁹⁷ Richard Fowler’s ready-made mattresses cost from £6 to £14, but if the materials were “found” or provided by the customer, the mattresses were only one dollar each.⁹⁸ Thomas Bradford offered feather beds and horsehair mattresses made to order “on shortest notice.”⁹⁹ Edward Weyman mentioned the solution to a “pesky” problem with all stuffed materials; his mattresses were stuffed “with the best curled hair which will not breed vermin.”¹⁰⁰ For that sort of thing, Thomas Coleman had his own recipe with which “Beds &c.” could be “effectually cured of bugs.”¹⁰¹ In 1800, William Eschause, a specialist in mattresses, was much more specific:

he is in possession of a secret to hinder the mites and all other insects from spoiling the feathers. He repairs Tick Beds, in a manner which renders them equal to new ones. Every year they ought to be well cleaned or they become very unhealthy. . . .¹⁰²

Sheets were supplied by upholsterers, as were blankets, quilts and rugs. Sheets and blankets belonged to the class of goods that, when sold as yardage, had an “ing” suffix added, as in “sheeting.” Sheeting, which was mainly linen, was available in several widths and qualities, and could be seamed together at home. Blanketing may have been intended mainly for bed blankets, since Indian trade blankets were made of two English woolen fabrics, duffels and strouds, and the yard goods were imported under those names. Duffel blankets, made up, were a very important Indian trade item; the favorite colors were bright blue and red. The Stroudwater Valley, where they were woven, was particularly famous for those dyes. Bed blankets were probably not the same weight nor as thick and shaggy as duffel blankets. A type of blanket named for its decoration was the “rose blanket,” which had wheel-like designs worked in each corner. Blacklock & Tunno opened an assortment of goods freshly arrived from London in 1783, among which were “best rose blankets.”¹⁰³ Burgwin, Hooper, and Alexander had duffel and rose blankets in a consignment which had arrived from Bristol.¹⁰⁴ It was wiser

for merchants to import woolens during the fall or winter, since during the summer they would go unsold and fall prey to moths. An interesting reference to cotton blankets was recorded in 1806: *The City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser* ran a notice on 3 July of that year that "cotton blankets, different sizes, with coloured and white fringes," were available at No. 1 Keith's Wharf.

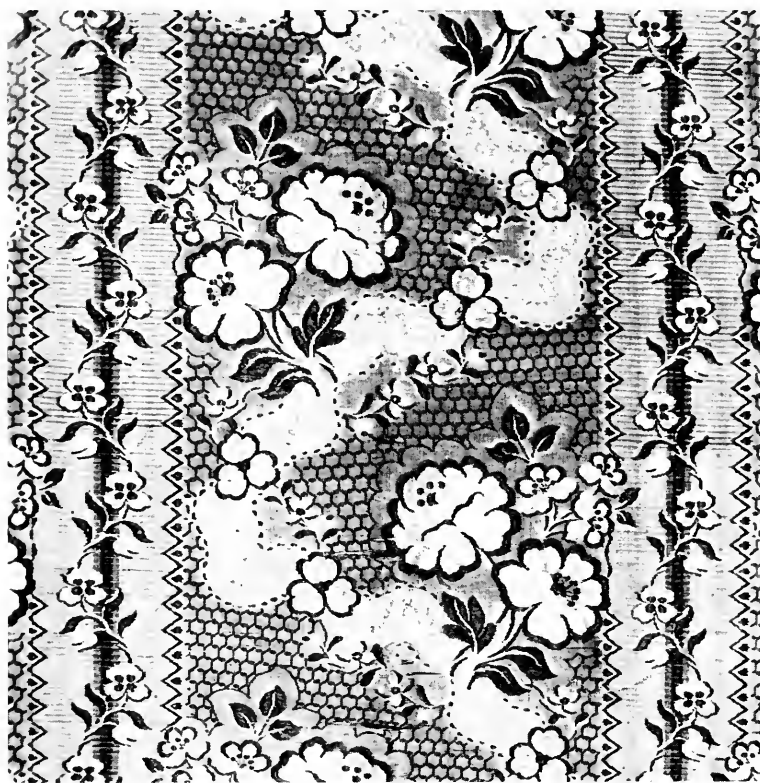


Figure 16. Gray brocaded silk lampas, probably of the late eighteenth century. According to oral tradition, this fabric was purchased in 1810 by Mrs. William Brisbane in England for use as "hangings" in her Charleston residence. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.

Quilts and rugs added considerably to the warmth of beds. Quilts hardly need to be explained. They were essentially two fabrics sandwiching a filling, and finely stitched to keep the filling in place. Rugs were quite different. "Rug" is a word of Scandinavian extraction implying "shaggy." Rugs were usually

heavy woolen weaves with a long nap. They were used only on beds. It was not until the “hearth rug” was introduced near the end of the eighteenth century that rugs had any association with the floor. “Rugs” did not become a synonym for “carpet” until very much later.



Figure 17. Copperplate print in purple, late eighteenth century, possibly French. The subject of the scene has not been identified. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.

Covering all the other bedclothes was a decorative counterpane. The coverlet was a lesser cover, used underneath the counterpane. The term “coverlet,” however, later became confused with “counterpane.” Such shifts in semantics are difficult to chart. Another term, “bedspread,” which has such a twentieth century connotation, was used in place of “coverlet” in Chowan County, North Carolina inventory of 1772:

. . . Five good Feather Beds an old do. Six Bed Steds Four hides two Mats five Cords Eleven Pillows Ten pair Sheets Nine pair of pillow cases three good Homespun Counterpanes one old do Fair new Bed spreads, one Rug, three Bed Quilts three Dutch Blankets five Homespun do. . . .¹⁰⁵

In 1811, a South Carolina inventory listed “bedspred or covered” as though the two were synonymous.¹⁰⁶

Numerous inventories drawn before 1750 list counterpanes, as the following samples reveal:

- 1725 "callico counterpin"
- 1726 "cotton counterpin"
- 1728 "cotton counterpin"
- 1733 "cotton counterpin India do."
- 1733 "callico counterpin"
- 1745 "one India peeling counterpane"
- 1745 "one suit chintz curtains with a chintz counterpane"
- 1748 "cotton counterpane"
- 1748 "callacoe curtains and counterpain"¹⁰⁷



Figure 18. Block-printed cotton in the Chinese taste, English, ca. 1805-1807; the dark background is unusual. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.

Merchants' advertisements show cotton counterpanes and white counterpanes at least as early as 1738. It is interesting to find documentation for so much cotton fabric imported before 1750, in view of the late development of the cotton cloth industry in England. Years of preeminence in weaving wool had preceded cotton manufacture. Some of what was called "cotton" before the eighteenth century was a woolen weave, napped or cottoned on the surface. True cotton cloth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was imported from India. Cotton yarn and

cotton wool was brought to England by the Levant Company, an English trading company established in the sixteenth century for exchange of goods with Mediterranean ports and the Middle East.^{107a} The yarn was expensive, and generally was combined with linen yarn to make fustians (warp of linen, weft of cotton). When imported as raw fiber, it was called cotton wool, and used as batting or made into twine for candle wicks. Eighteenth century mechanical inventions and improvements revolutionized spinning machinery, and it became possible to spin cotton into a strong warp. The technology of weaving machinery, however, soon caught up with spinning machinery. Cheaper sources of supply, sought in the West Indies, were provided in the 1790's by Georgia and South Carolina. By this time, English cotton had become a very large industry, and the appearance of cotton as bed or other furnishing material is to be expected, in contrast with the smaller amount of these fabrics in use before 1750.

Bed curtains in the first half of the century also reflect the cotton or calico trend. The variety of them was greater, however. The list of early eighteenth century bed curtains was spiced with such items as "seersucker curtains," "old cherry derry curtains," "a suit of old cloth curtains," "old seitten bed furniture," a "pair of callico blue and white curtains and vallences," and "1 blue chintz bed and furniture."¹⁰⁸

Bed and their decoration should have given upholsterers a golden opportunity to display their descriptive skills. With some exceptions, however, advertisements were rather general in this area. The upholsterers, as usual, assured the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston that they would be served quickly and cheaply, in the most fashionable style, and in the genteelest manner. Then they simply stated that the curtains could be either drawn-up, plain, festoon, Venetian or drapery. Bed and window curtains were made either to pull to the side or to draw up by means of cords. The draw-up curtains either rose straight up or drew up diagonally. This was engineered by rings sewn at intervals to the back of the curtain and cords run through the rings; the placement of the rings determined either a vertical or a diagonal pull. The resulting folds of material was part of the art of successful drapery. Windows could be fitted with either a single curtain or two curtains. On beds, the curtains varied in number, from three to five. A simple set was four, one curtain on each side of the bed at the head, to pull halfway along the bed when closed, and one curtain at each foot post, pulling in two directions to meet

the others. Draw-up or festoon styles of curtains were used on beds and pulled up to the cornice. The cords were then tied off around cloak pins. Ingenious arrangements of pullies and cords were occasionally used to cause the curtains to rise up together.¹⁰⁹



Figure 19. Roller-printed linen, the scenes in green, ca. 1815. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.

Evidence for the use of curtain rings as early as 1704 in South Carolina has been found. In an invoice of goods shipped to Captain John Perris' plantation in South Carolina was the entry "21 brass rings for Cortains."¹¹⁰ Curtain rings were mentioned in inventories throughout the eighteenth century with enough frequency to assume that they were readily available. Shipments of merchants' goods included curtain rings. Mrs. Rhoda Hole's inventory of shop goods in 1732 listed curtain rings.¹¹¹ In the ironmongery imported by Duncan Archibald, a blacksmith and bell-hanger, were "Pendant rings of all sizes; Curtain do."¹¹² They were alternately called "brass O's." Rods, when described, were generally of iron. Thomas Elfe's accounts mentioned a cypress rod.¹¹³ Bed valances were tacked up to cornices, and a profusion of tack holes often remain in the cornices of early beds. Curtains were also tacked up on windows instead of using rings; these were tied back when they were open. Small tapes found on extant

curtains in New England have not been observed to be more than a quarter of an inch wide and one half to one inch long. They cannot be substituted for curtain rings since they are too small to use over a rod. Speculation regarding the use of tapes or "tabs" in this fashion have found little actual corroboration.¹¹⁴

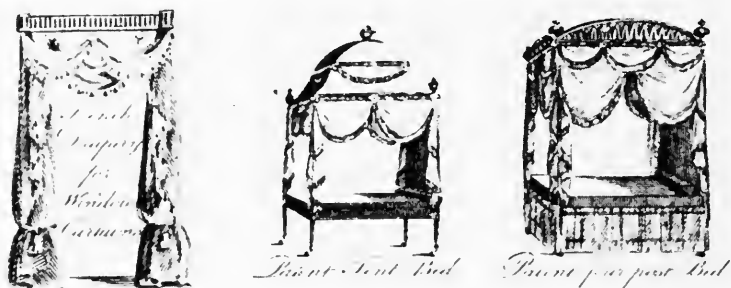


Figure 20. Detail from the trade card of the Butler cabinet manufactory in London, ca. 1790-1803, illustrating, left to right: "French drapery for Window Curtains," a "Patent Tent Bed," and a "Patent four post Bed." From Heal, *London Furniture Makers*, p. 18.

A very early splash of far-Eastern color for bed furniture in a Carolina inventory comes not from South Carolina records, but from a North Carolina one: "A True Inventory of the Estate of Mr. Francis Godfrey Deceased . . . one Sute of pantatos Curtins and vallens . . . three pantantos Curtins and vallens . . . one paire of Green searge Curtins and vallens . . . one pantado Tablecloth."¹¹⁵ This is an example of a household which used "pintados" or gaudy India painted cottons, not once, but four times on beds, and also as a table cover. India painted cottons were wildly popular, and had been imported into England since the beginning of the seventeenth century. They eventually became part of the re-export trade to the American colonies. When an English act forbidding the importation, use, and wear of India painted cottons was passed in 1700, due to their effect on consumption of other household fabrics, their re-exportation was allowed. Embargoes did not stop England from loving and trying to imitate the cheerful fabric. English experiments in block printing with fast dyes resulted in mastery of the technique of printing brown, black, purple, and red by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Indian calico was used for the printing. In 1721, another English law was passed, answering again to the

worried clamor of other textile producers. The new law forbade the sale, use, and even wear of English printed calicoes, and as a consequence fustian, a mixture of linen weft and cotton warp, became the printing medium. The fustians were allowed to be printed for the export market, so it is reasonable to expect to find them frequently in South Carolina records. The Manchester Act of 1736 then opened the home market to British printed fustians. Polychrome printing was perfected in England around 1740, and by the middle of the century was a thoroughly established industry. In the 1750's the English copperplate printing technique, using engraved metal plates, was discovered and perfected. By the 1760's copperplate prints were available on the American market. Cylinder printing, a third method of printing fabrics, was invented by 1783, but it was not until about 1810 that copper cylinders were in widespread use for printed furnishing fabric.¹¹⁶

Importers of fabrics actually covered a wide array of customary furniture weaves, including linen checks or "cross-barred stuff," as the checks were sometimes called. Silk damasks and other silks, woolens, worsteds, and mixed weaves, were brought into Charleston, and advertised at great length. "Old cloth" was a term for certain woolen weaves. "Stuff" originally meant worsteds.¹¹⁷ In spite of the silks and woolens, the unmistakable impression remains that in South Carolina, a great deal of "winter furniture" was fabrics that would have been classed in colder climates as "summer furniture."

In 1764, the inventory of Isaac Holmes, merchant, whose shop goods probably represented recent imports, included

black ground cottons @ 2/9 do. @ 2/6 purple ground
do. 2/2

1 ps. white chintz 40/ do. 35/

4 ps. red and white gingham @ 30/
callico 21d.

red & white copper plate 20/6 a piece

ps. red chintz 30/ lead ground chintz (ps. 1.17.0)

English chinz 20/ ps. do. [other prices to 29/]

1 ps. blue chair bottom 28 yds. @ 2/4

2 ps. chintz furniture 56 yds. @ 4/5 [@ 5/3, @ 4/]

blue & white callico 40/ ps.

7 yds. blue copper plate @ 2/6

29¼ yds. Purple & white linen @ 18d.

12 yds. purple & white callico 2/ [red & white, 2/3, black
 & white 21d.]
 printed linen @ 19d.
 superfine chintz @6/
 remnants shalloons, tammy, durant, callimanco (worsteds)
 38½ yds. worsted damask @ 12d.
 German serge @ 3/ purple do. @ 3/2
 4 yd. wide worsted figures
 striped camblets 25/ (brown, green, purple, do.)

Also listed was Irish sheeting and a host of utilitarian and fine linens, duffels, cotton counterpanes, bed blankets, mattresses, bed cords, curtain rings, brushes, and even bug traps — well over a hundred items in all.¹¹⁸ The copperplate fabrics alone show just how up-to-date imports to Charleston could be.



Figure 21. Green silk damask, fringed and sewn into a swag, probably eighteenth century. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.

Not everyone could enjoy such opulence. Frederick Struble's more humble possessions were appraised 18 May 1764:

1 mahogany bedstead, bedding & counterpane bolster &
 pillows &c. for Mrs. Struble.
 1 plain bedstead bed bolster & pillows 1 set curtains & quilt
 4½ pr. sheets
 4 straw bottom chairs
 1 child's crib
 an organ in pieces

- 1 bolster & bed
- 1 quilt & pavilion
- [other furniture items for Mrs. Struble]
- 1 mahogany couch bed & quilt
- 7 straw bottom chairs (half wore)^{118a}

The Struble household did at least contain a pavilion. Isaac Holmes possessed one hundred and eighty-four yards of pavilion gauze among his shop goods. John McQueen also had a pavilion on two of his bedsteads.

As it is often the case with documented objects that seem to elude description and are accompanied by contradictory pieces of evidence, pavilions in South Carolina had not one single form, but several. They were adapted to bedsteads. Since so many different kinds of bedsteads were in use in the eighteenth century, pavilions had to be made up in various sizes and shapes. The common form was an all-encompassing cover that hung down to the bottom of the bed, enclosing it completely when the bed was occupied. They could be specially made to enclose smaller settee beds, couches, easy-chair beds, and hammocks. Their principle purpose was utility, although they may at times have become decorative.

Several contemporary descriptions shed light on the subject of pavilions. On 20 January 1725, Mrs. Margaret Kennett wrote a long and outspoken letter to her mother, both praising and damning whatever took her fancy:

We have Fleas in all the Province but a very troublesome sort of Insect which they call muschatoe and are the same without Gnats so that all the Hott months we are forced to use pavilions made of Catgut Gause. Twenty yds. just makes a Pavilion.¹¹⁹

Eliza Lucas, a much kinder reporter, wrote to her brother Thomas in 1742:

The winters here are very fine and pleasant, but 4 months in the year is extremely disagreeable, excessive hott, much thunder and lightening, and muskatoes and sand flies in abundance.¹²⁰

Janet Shaw, traveling in North Carolina, stayed at "Point Pleasant" near the Cape Fear River in 1775. Conditions there were much the same as in South Carolina:

The heat daily increases, as do the Musquetoos, the bugs and the ticks. The curtains of our beds are now supplied by Musquetoos' nets. Fanny has got a near or rather elegant dressing room, the settees of which are canopied over with green gauze, and on these we lie panting for breath and air and are dressed in a single muslin petticoat and short gown.¹²¹

John Bartram, the well-known naturalist made the most complete observations on the subject while writing in his travel diary on 28 August 1765:

. . . in Charleston all good livers has what they call muschata curtains or pavilions some is silk some linen silk grass or Gaws thay are wove on purpose for that use & make a very comfortable lodging amongst thousands of those hungry vermin that infested all thair lodgings I thought at first that they would be stifling hot but upon tryall I found them very pleasant as thay are fine & so thin wove Just to keep out ye fly but if they have any hole in big enough to put ones little finder end int thay will fint it & torment us all by piercing our skin before morning if we are uncovered which is not uncommon in hot weather. . . .¹²²

Later in the diary he had remarked that "on ye musketos in Charl Town where we found them ye most intolerable of any place hitherto in our travails. . . ."¹²³

Ebenezer Kellogg, who had reported on Charleston feather beds and mattresses, naturally had something to say about pavilions as well:

"December 1, 1817: On going to bed, I was surprized to find my bed closely curtained with a very thin muslin or millinet. I threw one side it upon the bed part and went to bed. In the night I learned the use of this canopy, as it is called by the people, for the mosquitoes took advantage of my neglect to throw down the curtain and

come buzzing about me at the end of November, as if it had been only September.”¹²⁴

Finally, Abiel Abbott wrote a letter to his wife in February 1782, further indicating that summer was not the only season when mosquito protection was needed.

“It is a curious fact that in the extraordinary winter that the pest of this country has been prowling & singing every night & we have not quiet slumbers, except as we shrink behind our gauze rampart . . . the gauze pavilions give me a charming sense of security, like a good roof in a pitiless pelting storm. . . .”¹²⁵



Figure 22. Trade card of William Gilbert, London, ca. 1780, illustrating a rose blanket at the top right of the cartouche. Bedside carpets are shown in both lower corners. From *Heal*, *London Furniture Makers*, p. 65.

The use of mosquito netting may have come to South Carolina with the settlers who arrived from the West Indies in the seventeenth century. Naturally, anyone who had lived in the West Indies had experience in dealing with mosquitoes. “To combat these stinging insects the [Barbadian] colonists soon learned to clear the foilage around their houses, to set smoky fires, and to

daub vinegar on the bites. To combat the ants and woodlice that devoured cloth, paper and wooden articles in side their houses, they swept their floors frequently, stood their table legs inside cups of water, and hung shelves from the ceiling by tarred ropes for food storage.”¹²⁶

Inventories indicate that pavilions were often tucked away in trunks or chests; it was not unusual for them to be described as a “parcel old pavilions &c.”¹²⁷ This was one proof that they were completely of fabric, had no wooden components, and therefore should not be confused with a tester. A “cotten broken pavillion” recorded “in the closett” of Joseph Barry¹²⁸ came as a shock to the author, however. Such seemingly contradictory references may often set back research that otherwise has appeared to offer clear evidence. In this case, the perspective was easily restored by two further finds: the “3 old broken coverlids” found in John Lloyd’s inventory¹²⁹ and “2 old broken table cloath” in the inventory of William Ramsey,¹³⁰ thereby explaining “broken” as an occasional synonym for torn.

Why South Carolinians chose to use the term “pavilion” for mosquito netting is not clear. There may be a connection with the Latin word for pavilion, or *papilio*, which meant both “moth” and “tent.” In the seventeenth century “pavillion” was the French term for “canopy.” During that period a canopy was suspended over the head of the bed by means of a cord attached to the ceiling “. . . and was a cone-shaped or ‘domed’ bowl, with a valance all around and with two or three large curtains . . . that had to drag . . . on the ground in order to reach out and encompass the foot end of the bed.”¹³¹ This would have provided a decorative means of hanging a pavilion over a low-post bed or couch, and easily could have been adapted for use in some of the early homes of South Carolina. It is possible that the term was brought to the Low Country by early French Huguenot immigrants.

Upholsterers, of course, made pavilions. John Mason’s 1765 advertisement displayed a concise list of prices for his upholstery work, including: “Plain bed, £8.,” “window curtain £1.10.0” and “for making a pavilion £2.0.0.”¹³² Mason soon moved to Philadelphia, where in 1767 he published a somewhat similar list but did not include a pavilion. He obviously had more custom for pavilions in Charleston than in Philadelphia.¹³³ Abraham Maddocks advertised pavilions in 1773.¹³⁴ Among the public

goods of Anne Fowler auctioned after her decease were "pavilions" and "silk and pavilion gauze."¹³⁵ Thomas Bradford's inventory listed "1 pc. Scotch gauze 8/."¹³⁶ Charles David offered for sale "some fringes for cots and pavilions."¹³⁷

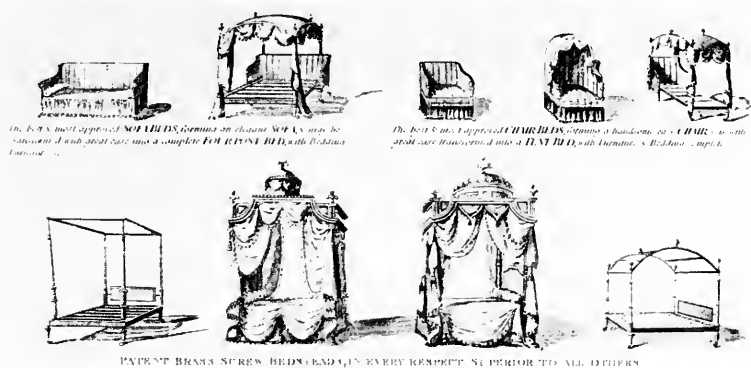


Figure 23. Details from the trade card of Morgan & Sanders, London, ca. 1803-1817, illustrating (upper left) sofa beds both closed and opened, and (upper right) chair beds both closed and opened. In the lower plates are (left) a dismantlable tester bed with lath bottom, and (right) a tent bed with sacking bottom. From *Heal*, London Furniture Makers, p. 18.

Field beds and tent beds easily could be dressed with a pavilion. The field bed had arched tester laths and was "furnished" with a type of one-piece cover that incorporated the curtains. It was sewn together in sections in order to fit the tester properly, and the "curtains" could be tied back in the daytime.¹³⁸ This was no doubt akin to "throwover furniture," as it was known in England. Throwover furniture had lead weights slotted into the tapes that lined the bottom, in order to help keep it in place.¹³⁹ Some camp beds had a slanted or canted tester, useful for beds placed under an eave, and probably were also used to support a throwover pavilion.

South Carolina inventories listed pavilions for cot bedsteads, pine bedsteads, cribs, cradles, and hammocks. It was not just the "good livers" who owned them, as John Bartram wrote. A simple arrangement for some of these might have been hooks or rods attached to the wall or ceiling. Unexplained hardware of this sort found in the bed chamber of an old house might be seen with new insight.

In 1740, Robert Pringle, a Charleston merchant, wrote his brother Andrew in London, who was supplying him with import goods, to send more reasonably-priced Italian gauze. He wanted

green or blue as those colors were “the best liked.”¹⁴⁰ In January, 1743, he ordered additional green gauze at one shilling per yard for pavilions to be used on beds during the ensuing summer.¹⁴¹ In February of the following year, however, Pringle was annoyed because Andrew evidently shipped finished pavilions. Those sent were much too small for beds “as us’d here” and “are fit only for Field Beds.” Pringle preferred to have gauze sent in pieces.¹⁴² Obviously, the pavilions were being made for large high-post bedsteads. The most often-mentioned fabric for pavilions, whether in merchant’s lists or inventories, was gauze. This could have been silk gauze, Italian silk gauze, or cheaper thread (linen) gauze.



Figure 24. Field bed hung with a replica dimity, illustrating one eighteenth century method of hanging a bed, here with an integrally-sewn canopy and curtains. Courtesy Old Sturbridge Village, Henry E. Peach photograph.

It was striped, checked, or otherwise patterned in the weave (“fine-figured gauze”), or plain. It was available in white, green,

blue, pink, or blue-and-green. Other thin fabrics were also used, such as lawns (clear lawns, striped lawns, flowered lawns) which were very delicate linens.¹⁴³ "Platilloes" were another thin linen.¹⁴⁴ As one might expect, muslin was also used. A more unusual fabric was "silk grass," which was a fiber extracted from the leaves of the Yucca plant.¹⁴⁵

A puzzle still remains in the concept of pavilions. It appears that they were used at times as summer furniture on large highpost beds without other curtains. Pavilions used as the sole hanging for beds may have been elaborate, though the actual treatment is unknown. They were also used at times with the usual curtains. It is possible that pavilions were hung with lines and tassels and all the paraphernalia of elaborate bed furniture. They did have fringes, so pavilions are known to have had at least some decoration, but fringes also helped merely to add weight to the edges in order to hold them down. Common sense and fashion are at war in this kind of analysis, and the central matter is to discover whether utility or decoration prevailed in pavilions of the eighteenth century.

John McQueen owned twelve mahogany chairs with leather bottoms. Just how much leather was supplied to upholsterers by Charleston tanners and saddlers has not been thoroughly investigated for this survey. It seems reasonable to expect, however, that leather upholstery in Charleston was done with local materials. Connections between the trades are suggested by certain documentation. For example, one of Joseph Fidler's designated pallbearers was "Mr. Addison,"¹⁴⁶ perhaps Benjamin Addison, who was in partnership with Peter Laurens in the saddlery business.¹⁴⁷ Another leather-supply connection may have existed between Walter Rowland, upholsterer, and Matthias Johnson, leather breeches maker. Johnson made, mended, and washed "all sorts of Leather Breeches either black, purple or cloth colour'd."¹⁴⁸ Rowland advertised in 1741 that he was "living at Mr. Johnson's the Sign of the Buck and Breeches."¹⁴⁹

An interesting cooperative trade effort was that between upholsterers and coachmakers. The interiors of carriages were upholstered. Seats were stuffed and covered with leather or broadcloth, interior surfaces other than seats were lined, floors were carpeted, Venetian blinds were added in some cases, and the usual upholstery trim of bindings and tassels was added as decoration. Many coachmakers included coach trimming in their

line. Coachmaker Matthias Hutchinson advertised in 1772 that he had imported "green and blue Caffoys,"¹⁵⁰ "green, blue and light-coloured BROAD-CLOTHS, with Livery Lace suitable to each, Wilton carpeting for Chaise Bottoms. . . ." ¹⁵¹ Upholsterers advertised that they would do coach work. Jonas Spoke, a mattress maker, and Walter Rowland were the only two of the first six identified Charleston upholsterers who were not involved with coach appointments. Robert Hunt noted that he mended and relined the interiors of "coaches, chairs, chaises, &c."¹⁵² Samuel Bowler, who referred to himself as an "Uppholsterer from London" in Charleston advertisements,¹⁵³ identified himself as "Coachmaker from London," during the time when he worked in Williamsburg.¹⁵⁴

Joseph Fidler's inventory, taken 26 March 1742, listed items that tied him to both coach trimming and coachmaking: "10 Skin's Gilt Leather £4 Painted Paper 5/- . . ." and "A Chair Body Lined with blue Cloth one ditto with a dark olive one old Chair body painted mosiac [sic] without lining," and several more parts of carriages, as well as a coach, chaise and a chair.¹⁵⁵ Signing Fidler's inventory were coachmaker Samuel Perkins, along with Mathew Shrub and Richard Caulton. Caulton was one of the artisans working both as an upholsterer and as a coach furnisher. Soon after Fidler's death, he moved into the deceased tradesman's house.¹⁵⁶ Not long after that, Caulton also moved to Williamsburg, where his advertisement emphasized his skill in upholstery work, but added that he executed coach work.¹⁵⁷

The "painted paper" mentioned in Joseph Fidler's inventory could have been for either household or carriage use, and, for that matter, the same might have been true of the "10 Skin's Gilt Leather." Gilt leather was used on walls in the seventeenth century in England, and did not go out of style until the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Fixed wall hangings evolved from the loose tapestries and hangings of the Middle Ages in Europe. Besides leather, rich textiles such as velvets and other silks, painted cottons, and worsted damasks became popular, at least in wealthy households. Wallpaper, when it came into use, probably was considered at first a cheap substitute for fabrics. Flock papers, developed in England in the seventeenth century, were made in imitation of cut velvets. Very finely shredded wool was sprinkled on glue which was stenciled in patterns on the wallpaper. These papers were justly famous, and much admired on the Continent.¹⁵⁸ Generally, however, it was during the

eighteenth century that wallpaper production flourished. It was pasted together in sheets to make a roll, which by 1770 was standardized as twelve yards in length.¹⁵⁹ English blockprinted papers were imported to Charleston by about mid-century. They were called "paper hangings," while the textiles were still known as "wall hangings."¹⁶⁰

The popularity of wallpaper in South Carolina can be demonstrated in a number of ways. One of the most oft-quoted journals that described life in Charleston was that of Josiah Quincy, who visited the city in 1773. He seemed to be awed by the splendor of Miles Brewton's house, not least among the decoration he admired being the "rich blue paper with gilt mashee borders."¹⁶¹ A less glamorous house on Queen Street owned by coachmaker Richard Hart had wallpaper above the wainscoting. Hart offered the house for sale, describing it as "about twenty-four feet in front, and thirty-six feet in depth, with a good dry cellar . . . six good rooms . . . several closets and buffets . . . four of the rooms is papered and wainscotted the height of a chair. . . ."¹⁶²

Wallpaper could be obtained from any of the merchants advertising it, and also from paperhangers and certain other tradesmen. Bookbinders, not surprisingly, imported wallpaper as an adjunct to their stationer's supplies. Painters both sold and hung wallpaper, and working arrangements between paperhangers and painters were relatively common. Wallpaper occasionally could be obtained at auction, and in one instance was offered in a raffle: "A most superb suit of TAPESTRY PAPER for a single room, to be raffled for as soon as the chances can be procured."¹⁶³ Paperhanging was not completely the prerogative of professionals. Slaves were hired out for this work. In 1793, a meeting of painters, glaziers, and paperhangers was held in Charleston to discuss this practice, in order to ascertain whether this slave labor constituted a threat to their trade.¹⁶⁴

The alacrity with which upholsterers in Charleston seem to have entered the paperhanging trade may be the best proof of its success as a household decorative medium. Their imports reflected both currently-available English, and later, French styles; both were described in ebullient terms. "Several sets of fine figured paper hangings for rooms, ceilings and screens, some India pictures and mashee work," were offered by Thomas Booden in 1756.¹⁶⁵ John Blott, who seemed to particularly favor "flower pots for chimneys"¹⁶⁶ and "rich landscapes for chimneys," also offered

“rich damask paper of all colours,” “screens covered with maps” and “plain blue and green paper with gold bead.” Richard Fowler’s “very genteel gothik and stucco patterns fit for halls and staircases” were advertised in 1768,¹⁶⁷ and “flowered and striped lutestring patterns” were offered in 1772.¹⁶⁸ The hall patterns illustrated a decorating practice that dictated particular motifs as appropriate for particular rooms. The lutestring patterns were wallpaper adaptations of silk designs, since lutestring, or “lustring,” was a silk. Although English wallpaper was the most popular at first, by the end of the century other countries offered competition. An important acknowledgement of domestic American production was made in the 1790 advertisement of cabinet warehousemen John and George Watson, who listed paperhangings from Le Collay & Chardon’s manufactory in Philadelphia. “Their papers having stood the examination of good judges, are acknowledged to be fully equal to any imported,” as the firm proudly stated.¹⁶⁹

Then came the French papers. In 1791, not long after John Francis Delorme arrived in Charleston from Philadelphia, he assured the public that he had an “assortment of handsome Paper-Hangings from Paris, in the latest Taste, and some emblematic of the late Revolution.”¹⁷⁰ In 1792, he was importing “handsome paper hangings, borders, festoons in the latest taste.”¹⁷¹ Borders had become increasingly important, and plain monochrome papers were given very rich borders. In 1794, Delorme made and sold bed and window cornices covered with colored paper.¹⁷² He continued to import, and he received three thousand pieces in 1795, in addition to “some very rich pictures from Paris.”¹⁷³ He did not limit himself to French fashions, however, and was perfectly willing to provide English work. He also both made and imported certain “English” and “French” furniture forms.¹⁷⁴ When he diverted his line to looking glasses, and some of these were fitted with English frames, and some were French. Delorme was very much a Jack-of-all-trades, and in the same 1797 advertisement he let it be known in Charleston that he had engaged “several of the best hands in the Cabinet-Makers Line: any orders for any kind of furniture, shall be neatly and punctually executed.”¹⁷⁵

Louis Dubois also endeavored to offer the most fashionable goods, and was determined to suit the taste of any customer. He imported French papers in 1806.¹⁷⁶ In 1816, he received a shipment of both French and American papers from New York. He

already had on hand plum color, green and yellow papers.¹⁷⁷ The French scenic papers he advertised in 1818 depicted such subjects as "Telemachus in the Island of Calypso," "the monument of Paris," "Psyche," and "Cupids, &c."¹⁷⁸ Listed in Dubois's inventory of 1828 were two thousand four hundred and forty pieces of paper hangings, one thousand and twenty-three pieces of border paper, and thirty-seven scenic views.¹⁷⁹

RICHARD FOWLER,
UPHOLSTERER and PAPER HANGER, in Meeting Street,
Has imported in the last Vessels from London.

A very large and neat Assortment of Goods,
in the UPHOLSTERY BUSINESS,

CONSISTING of some very rich and elegant bed patterns in chintz colours, likewise red and white, blue and white, purple and red copper-plate cottons, also a very great variety of trimmings to suit any of the above bed patterns, such as fringes of all sorts and colours, very neat narrow fringe for vallions, chair and bed lace, lines and tassels, curtain rings, clock pins, some very rich blue furniture damask for chairs, a very great variety of

PAPER HANGINGS,

of the newest patterns, with plain sky blue, plain pea green, with rich double burnished gold machine borders, some very handsome landscapes for chimney pieces, horse hair seating, brass nails, &c. &c. &c.

He continues to follow the UPHOLSTERY business in all its branches, such as making all sorts of bed furniture, window curtains, Venitian shades, sofas, French chairs, easy chairs, and French back stools.—He is much obliged to the gentlemen and ladies for their past favours, and shall be glad of their future, as they may depend on their work being executed in a neat, fashionable, and workman like manner, and dispatched with care and assiduity.

N. B. He has a small consignment of men and womens SILK HOSE, which will be sold cheap for cash.

Figure 25. Richard Fowler's advertisement in the South-Carolina Gazette, and Country Journal for 22 October 1771.

The South Carolina climate may have necessitated particular methods of paperhanging; at least John Blott felt this to be so. After three years' trial, he felt that he had learned the best method

of hanging, and he warranted his paper to stay up in a neat and durable manner. The method generally practiced, he felt, resulted in spoiled paper.¹⁸⁰ Richard Bird, who emigrated to Charleston from New York, offered a way to avoid the problem of the voracity of bugs for wallpaper glue. He had evolved “a paste that has a peculiar quality destroying all vermin in the walls.”¹⁸¹ Wallpaper was occasionally varnished. Delorme used such a coating on some of his paperhangings, adding “beauty and durability” to it.¹⁸² Painters Jeremiah Wilcox, George Flagg, Jr., and George Sugden, who advertised a partnership in painting, glazing, gilding, and paperhanging, felt that their varnishing was done in an elegant and superior style. It could be washed with water, and resembled an oil painting.¹⁸³



Figure 26. Hand-painted wallpaper, originally installed in a house in Columbia County, Georgia, ca. 1830. The paper was originally glued to canvas; the subject of the scene has not been identified. MESDA collection, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph P. Hanes.

Varnished wallpaper may have been used in ships' cabins, a practical solution in view of inevitable contact with salt water. Ships' cabins indeed were often luxuriously furnished, and captains and their more important passengers expected to be

supplied with a reasonable facsimile of home comforts. "Ships' cabins furnished with curtains and drapery of any shape desired, and mattresses made to fit cabins," were services listed in Delorme's advertisement in the *Courier* for 27 October 1818. Ships required routine refurbishing and refitting after long voyages, and we may assume that cabins received such attention as well. Upholsterer Thomas Coleman assured "Captains and owners of vessels [that they] may have their cabins fitted up with gilt leather, or paper, at the shortest notice," he may have been competing for work on transient vessels.¹⁸⁴

In the same advertisement, Coleman noted that he would line pews and execute other church upholstery work. A good deal of this work was done for churches, and although taken for granted at the time, such contracts are exceedingly important to the researcher. A wonderful series of accounts from the Independent Congregational (Circular) Church in Charleston include items of upholstery work. The accounts begin in 1774, and continue past the cut-off date for this survey, 1820. In 1774, a new church was begun on Archdale Street as an "annexation" to the church on Meeting Street, and the accounts cover new work, replacements and repairs for both buildings. In 1787, Thomas Bradford, upholsterer, was paid for a pulpit cushion he made of green velvet, with a silk fringe bought by him in Philadelphia; a second entry presumably concerning the same cushion described it with four tassels. The cushion was intended to hold a gilded blue morocco folio Bible. Both the Bible and its cushion were kept under lock and key when not in use, since a chest for this purpose was made in 1808, and a closet built in the steeple for these and other valuables in 1814. Cabinetmaker William Axson lined the governor's pew with cloth and brass nailing in 1788. The cover for a pulpit, along with bag covers of silk bombaset (a silk and worsted weave) tied with ribbons, for brass pulpit candle branches in 1811, were among the many general accounts to Job Palmer. Palmer was an elder in the church, apparently in charge of such contracts. The other upholsterer mentioned was Joseph Worthington. In 1800, Worthington was paid for the work he did in draping both churches in mourning for George Washington.¹⁸⁵

Upholsterers, traditionally associated with funerals, may not have taken as large a part in services for the deceased in Charleston as did cabinetmakers and carpenters. An examination of Thomas Elfe's accounts indicate how very often he provided coffins in his normal line of business. Weyman & Carne advertised in 1765

that they had imported from London "A compleat assortment of coffin furniture, consisting of mens, youths and children's handles, squares, lacing, large and small letters and figures, brass nails and tacks, gilt, silver'd and lacquer'd, black broad cloth, with swan-skin and tassels for full-trimmed coffins. . . ." ¹⁸⁶ In March, 1792, Thomas Bradford advertised that he furnished funerals. ¹⁸⁷ None of the other upholsterers mentioned this service in their notices except for Joseph Worthington, of the partnership of Worthington & Kirby, which in 1793 advertised "funerals furnished at the shortest notice." ¹⁸⁸

The Independent Congregational Church accounts also shed more light on the use of blinds. The problem of strong afternoon sunlight required attention, particularly on the west side of a room. A sun blind was made for a large west front window, the job requiring ten yards of durant. Pullies, rings and cloak pins were provided for the blind. Another blind in the same building was made of ten yards of green callimanco, which, like the durant sun blind, was a worsted. For some circular windows there were "curtain blinds" of homespun cotton cloth. Ten sets of folding blinds were made for the south window, which must have been very large, unless the number of blinds was a clerical error. At the east end of the church was a Venetian window, and there was presumably another, for "a full Sett of Inside Blinds to the Venetian Windows" were made of mahogany and painted. ¹⁸⁹

An interesting entry in these Church records was the carpeting. In 1818, an order was paid for 204 1/4 yards of narrow carpeting, with binding, which had been made up for the aisles of the church. ¹⁸⁹ This use of carpeting in a public building was in great contrast with the lack of floor coverings only a century earlier. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, carpets were still used as table covers, and were seldom seen on the floor. Floor carpets in Charleston were sufficiently rare, even as late as 1738, to have been articles of interest and curiosity.

The Wilton carpet and the Scotch carpet featured in John McQueen's 1764 inventory were probably room size. They would have been imported either as finished carpets, or made up in Charleston. They were both seamed products, made on a regular-width loom, the Wilton with a pile, the Scotch a flat-weave. Scotch carpets originated in England, probably during the 1730's, and Wilton carpets were introduced about 1740. At first, they

were imported as individual made-up goods to Charleston, since most advertisements mention "floor carpets" rather than "carpeting." Once they began to be transported across the Atlantic in strips, a whole new area of work was made available to the upholsterer. Unfortunately, it is not known just when this happened. The earliest Low Country reference for such work is M. Alken's advertisement of 1785, in which his "executive" commissions included carpets.¹⁹⁰ The Chippendale and Linnell firms in London were busily employed in making up and installing carpets in the 1750's, so it was perfectly possible for such work to have been carried out in South Carolina. One reference which documents aspects of carpeting services was a 1751 advertisement by Henry Brown, "Silk Dyer and dry scowerer from Dublin . . . [who] cleans carpets, floor cloths. . . ." ¹⁹¹ An extant upholsterer's account book as extensive as Thomas Elfe's would be very welcome in clearing up such puzzles. One tantalizing entry mentions a "Day book of accounts one Ledger of do 1 Book called List of Notes and Acceptances" entered at the end of the 1828 Louis Dubois inventory previously cited. Mrs. Eleanor Dubois expected to continue in the business, and may have continued to add entries to these accounts. The books later may have descended to one of the daughters mentioned in Dubois's will, Henrietta Canaud or Anna Lebleux.¹⁹² Perhaps they still exist.

In 1822, John J. Sheridan advertised "carpets cut out,"¹⁹³ leaving clear evidence, though late, which can be associated with the fitting of carpets to the wall. Fitted carpets became more fashionable after 1800, and could be made from any of the existing seamed carpeting. Patterns were quite varied, and were set off by suitable borders. They followed the contours of fireplaces and other such projections in a room, and were tacked down firmly. Hearth rugs, frequently in a matching pattern, were supplied for the area before the hearth.

The types of carpets used in South Carolina have been discussed thoroughly in a previous article in the *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, "The Fashion for Carpets in South Carolina, 1736-1820."¹⁹⁴ Further information, principally concerned with the subject of straw matting, has been found since the earlier study. Martha Savage's inventory of 1761 included a "palmetto floor mat, £3." This is the first reference found by the author for palmetto mats, and is important since it provides evidence for the use of this native material. Martha Savage also owned "2 Portugal floor mats old £5," "3 small worsted floor

carpets made of Cloth Lists and old hair Cloth £6," and "a large worsted floor carpet £10."¹⁹⁵ Perhaps the Portuguese mats served as examples for the construction of the palmetto mat. The three small list carpets are interesting as well. List carpets were made of old cloth cut into thin strips and used as a weft across a yarn warp. At least two of the carpets were made this way; the other must have been a hair cloth mat. Another early owner of a straw carpet was Jehu Elliott, a planter of St. Paul's Parish, whose inventory of 27 March 1762 reveals such a carpet, appraised at £4.¹⁹⁶ The 1764 inventory of merchant John Jones contained grander floor coverings. "1 pair of Persia Bedside carpets" were located in his store, and his home contained "1 large Witton [sic] Carpet," "1 Large Straw floor Matt," and "1 Passage Cloth."¹⁹⁷

This survey of upholstery practices in South Carolina during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was intended primarily as a focus upon objects. Personalities were not meant to intrude, and no research was carried out with the intention of unraveling the lives of the individuals whose records have been examined. In spite of this, the human presence has made itself felt quite intensely. First of all, there were the personal ambitions of upholsterers arriving in Charleston, most of them advertising almost immediately, and with a certain swagger. There were the women who assisted their husbands in the trade, or did a little work on their own. There was the lively sense of activity which emanated from the records of Thomas Elfe's shop. There were visitors describing their impressions of South Carolina, particularly in the use of moss as stuffing, and pavilions to combat the invasions of mosquitoes. There was the all-important matter of trade and the personal excitement inherent in the arrival of each new batch of imports. Above all, there were the inventories. Each inventory is different, and while there are some which are much more extensive than John McQueen's, some were extremely brief. All of them are interesting, and behind each one there is the sense of having "met" the owner through his belongings.

In John McQueen's inventory, the upholstered items mentioned speak of both luxury and of conservatism. Obviously, an inventory did not describe a group of objects acquired all at once, so the conservative items logically may be interpreted as plain common sense in retaining anything still serviceable. Personal objects in the McQueen home included books, prints, a gold-

headed cane, and a silver watch. Someone in the family played the harpsichord, and someone played the guitar. All such details are important to a full understanding of the principle subject treated here. Seeing the upholstered items in isolation is not a valid means of discerning how Charleston citizens lived. Nor is the examination of the subject of upholstery possible without a reminder that all such household goods were not just an expression of personal taste or even current taste, but were useful and practical belongings acquired for specific purposes. Upholstery was comprised of many branches, but the branches would not have existed without a need. The inventories of early householders have told us what people needed and used, and theirs, then, is the final word.

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APPENDIX

“Inventory & Appraisement of the Effects in Charlestown belonging to the Estate of John McQueen dec’d. At Mrs. McQueen’s dwelling house.” This inventory was taken on 2 February 1764 by John Forbes, Robert Philip, and William Glen. The total appraised value was £12,278.0.0. *Italics* are supplied by the author to indicate items in this inventory which are related to the upholstery trade.

- 1 Harpsichord with frame &c. £250
- 1 pr. Mahogany Dining Tables 5 ft. 3 in. by 3 ft. 10 in. each £30.
- 1 Round Mahogy Tea Table 2 ft. 6 in. diam. 5.0.0
- 12 *Mahogy Chairs with Leather Bottoms* 40.0.0
- 1 Sconce Glass 2 ft. 5 in. by 1 ft. 5 in. plate painted frame 20.0.0
- 1 pr. Fire Dogs, Shovel, Tongs & old Brass Fender & Flower Pot 7.0.0
- 2 Windsor Elbow Chairs 4.0.0
- 1 *Mahogany bedstead Feather bed, Matrass, Counterpane, Quilt, Pavilion Bed and Window Curtains Red printed Linen* 80.0.0
- 1 Close Stool Elbow Chair of Mahogany
- 1 Mahogy. Dressing Table wt. 3 drawers & 1 Do. Dressg. Glass 15 in. x 9 In. Plate 12.0.0
- 1 Clock & Case 70.0.0
- 1 Mahogany Dining Table 4ft. x 3½ 7.0.0
- 1 Do. Do. 3 ft. 2 by 2 ft. 5.0.0
- 1 Do. Sideboard Do. 2 ft. 7 by 2 ft. 3 2.0.0
- 1 Looking Glass damaged 3 ft. 6 by 1 ft. 3 7.0.0
- 1 old fire Grate 0.5.0
- 1 *Couch with Crimson Cover & Pillow*
- 1 Guittar
- 11 Month & Shepherdess, 1 Misoz. [sic, Miser?] & 1 Jenny Camron on Glass painted wt. Frames 14.0.0
- 4 Seasons & a Grandfather on Do. wt. Do. 5.0.0
- 1 Windsor garden seat 3.0.0
- 2 pine Tables
- 8 Hicory Rush bottom Chairs 2.0.0
- 12 *Mahogany Chairs with Yellow Silk Damask Bottoms* 120.0.0

- 1 *Settee Chair the Same* 20.0.0
 1 pr. Mahogany Card Tables £10. each 20.0.0
 1 Marble Slab with a Mahogany Frame 40.0.0
 1 Desk & a Book Case with Glass Doors 45.0.0
 1 Large Pier Glass 35.0.0
 2 Sconce Glasses wt. frames 2 ft. 9 by 1 ft. 8 50.0.0
 1 fire hearth with Open brass Fender Tongs Shovel &
 Flower Pot 35.0.0
 1 Set Blue and White Tea Table China 25.0.0
 1 Mahogany Cloaths Press 20.0.0
 1 ditto Spy Glass 5.0.0
 A Parcell of Printed Books 10.0.0
 1 Mahogany Tea Tray wt. Frame 2.0.0
 2 Japan'd Waiters 1.10.0
 1 *Walton* [sic] *Carpet*
 1 *Scotch ditto* 10.0.0
 A Parcel of China Glass & EarthenWare 25.0.0
 [silver tankard, soup spoon, table spoons, teaspoons,
 pair sugar tongs, pepper box, punch ladle, 72
 oz. @ 35/pr. oz. £126.0.0]
 1 Case Desert Knives & Forks 3.0.0
 10 pr. *Sheets* 7 & 5 pr. *Pillow Cases* 20.0.0
 6 Large Table Cloths
 6 Breakfast do. 2 doz. Napkins } 30.0.0
 1 *Bedstead Feather bed, small matrass Quilt & Purple
 Furniture* 30.0.0
 1 Mahogany Desk 20.0.0
 1 Broken sconce Glass 0.10.0
 1 Small Close Stool Chair
 1 *Mahogany bedstead, Feather bed 2 Matrasses Quilt
 Pavilion, Blue Bed and Window Curtains*
 40.0.0
 1 *Easy Chair with Callico cover* 15.0.0
 6 *Mahogany Chairs wt Crimson Damask (worsted)
 Seats* 25.0.0
 1 Do. Chest of Drawers 40.0.0
 1 Do. Dressing Table with 1 Drawer & 1 Do. Dress-
 ing Glass with 1 Drawer & 1 Do. Dressing
 Glass with 1 Drawer 7.0.0
 1 pr. Fire dogs 1.15.0
 1 *Large Leather Screen painted* 15.0.0

1 *Trunnel bedstead Feather bed Matrass and Quilt*

10.0.0

6 old black Trunks, 1 Cradle and 3 Baskets 5.0.0

10 Candle Molds & a Frame 1.0.0

2 old Saddles & 1 housing 2.0.0

2 *Check Mattresses* £5. ea £10.0.0

1 *Bolster & 3 Pillows* 5.0.0

7 *Blankets* 7.0.0

1 Old Cypress Bedsted

1 Childs Crib 1.0.0

1 *old Painted Floor Cloth* 0.10.0

1 pr. small Iron Dogs 1.0.0

1 Gold headed Cane 30.0.0

1 *Feather Bed & Bolster* 20.0.0

1 Cypress bedstead broke 0.15.0

1 Old Fire Grate 2.0.0

1 Chimney Glass 25.0.0

1 Silver Watch 15.0.0

2 pr. Brass Candlesticks & 1 pr Snuffers 3.0.0

1 Knife Box & a parcel of old Knives & Forks 1.5.0

1 Copper Boiler 10.0.0

2 tea kettles 1 Cooper Coffee Pot, 1 pewter beason, 5 sad
Irons, 1 Box Iron, 1 Brass mortar & Pestle & a parcel
Kitchen Furniture £10.0

An old Bay Horse (Jack) *Chair & Harness* 60.0.0

[Here follows a list of a total of 10 Negro slaves valued
at £2,280.]

His half of the Ship Union with her Tackle & Apparel &c.
5600.0.0

One Schooner called the Chance with her Tackle &c.
1200.0.0

[Here follows a list of four Negro slaves on board the
schooner, totalling £1200.0.0 in value.]

Charleston County, S.C., Wills, etc., V. 88a-88b, 1763-1767,
pp.298-301.

The author wishes to acknowledge the fact that the majority of the research contained in this article was derived from MESDA's Index of Early Southern Artists and Artisans.

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47. *SCG*, 5 November 1755.
48. *Ibid.*, 25 November 1756.
49. Mabel L. Webber, comp., "Marriage and Death Notices from the City Gazette," *SCHM*, vol. 21 (1920), p. 153.
50. Anonymous, "Marriage Notices from Negrin's Sociable and Quarterly Intelligencer, January and April 1804," *SCHM*, vol. 63 (1962), p. 238. The actual date of marriage was 15 November 1803.

51. *Wills*, No. 37, 1826-1834, 14 January 1827, p. 394.
52. Charleston County, S.C., *Inventories*, vol. G, 1824-1834, 9 June 1828, pp. 339-341 (hereafter cited as *Inventories*).
53. Charleston, *State Gazette of South Carolina*, 19 March 1792; Charleston, *Columbian Herald; or the Southern Star*, 19 September 1793.
54. *Charleston Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 5 June 1787; Jacob Mulligan, *Charleston Directory*, 1794; Charleston County, S.C., *Letters of Administration*, vol. K, 1778-1821, 6 February 1787, p. 130.
55. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century*, p. 531.
56. Gilbert, *Chippendale*, vol. 1, pp. 42-55.
57. Hayward and Kirkham, *Linnell*, vol. 1, p. 50.
58. *SCG*, 7 January 1751.
59. *Ibid.*, 8 November 1773.
60. Mabel L. Webber, ed., "The Thomas Elfe Account Book, 1768-1775," *SCHM*, vol. 39 (1938), p. 87 (hereafter cited as "Elfe"). This book was published in serial form in *SCHM*, volumes 35 through 42.
61. "Elfe," vol. 36 (1935), p. 80.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
63. *Ibid.*, vol. 38 (1937), p. 41.
64. Denis Diderot, ed., *Encyclopedie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Metiers* (Paris: Briasson, 1751-1780), vol. 9 (1771), unpagged. This information is part of the explanation of Plate 2247, under the section "Tapissier" (upholsterer), in one of the volumes entitled *Recueil de Planches Sur les Sciences, les Arts Libéraux, et les Arts Mécaniques*.
65. Florence Montgomery, *Textiles in America, 1650-1870* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984) pp. 254-255.
66. "Elfe," *SCHM*, vol. 36 (1935), p. 85.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
69. For a break down of Elfe's account book, see John Christian Kolbe, "Thomas Elfe, Eighteenth Century Charleston Cabinetmaker," (M.A. Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1980).
70. *SCG*, 14 November 1741; *Ibid.*, 25 November 1756; *Ibid.*, 18 September 1762; *Ibid.*, 2 February 1765; *SCG*, 14 May 1772; *SCG*, 27 September 1773; *Prime*, vol. 2, p. 217.
71. "Elfe," *SCHM*, vol. 36 (1935), p. 65.
72. *Ibid.*, vol. 39 (1938), p. 134.
73. *Ibid.*, vol. 36 (1935), p. 88.
74. Catherine Lynn, *Wallpaper in America, From the Seventeenth Century to World War I* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980), p. 156.
75. "Elfe," *SCHM*, vol. 38 (1937), p. 87.
76. *Ibid.*, vol. 39 (1938), p. 84.
77. Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor: The Domestic Interior, 1620-1920* (New York: Viking Press, 1984), p. 21.

78. *SCG*, 19 May 1772.
79. "Elfe," *SCHM*, vol. 37 (1936), p. 30.
60. Thomas Chippendale, *The Gentleman & Cabinet-Maker's Director* (London, 1762, reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1966), Plate No. XXXVI. The drapery looks full, but there is no cord and tassel in the drawing, so it is presumed to be fixed. It is really two cornice designs, and the curtain may be somewhat sketchy.
81. "Elfe," *SCHM*, vol. 36 (1935), p. 11.
82. *Ibid.*, vol. 37 (1936), p. 30.
83. *SCG*, 6 June 1774.
84. "Elfe," *SCHM*, vol. 36 (1935), p. 60; *Ibid.*, vol. 37 (1936), p. 31; *Ibid.*, vol. 36 (1935), p. 122; *Ibid.*, vol. 37 (1936), p. 154; *Ibid.*, vol. 38 (1937), p. 37; *Ibid.*, vol. 39 (1938), p. 165; *Ibid.*, vol. 39 (1938), p. 160.
85. *SCG*, 16 December 1756.
86. *Ibid.*, 25 November 1756.
87. Thomas Sheraton; *Cabinet Dictionary*, 2 vols. (1803; reprint ed., New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), vol. 1, p. 180. The cots and cot bedstead found listed on inventories were probably not swinging cots. Evidence of swinging cots have not been found for Charleston by the MESDA research staff according to a conversation with Bradford L. Rauschenberg, October, 1985.
88. In a lecture held at MESDA, 16 October 1985, Wallace B. Gusler described this method. An item in the Elfe accounts (*SCHM*, vol. 39 (1938), p. 134) list: "a sackg Bottom with cord £5.10 44 Staples [£]2. 5 yds of Sail Cloth [£]3.5 5 hd Tacks .7.6."
89. "Elfe," *SCHM*, vol. 35 (1934), p. 164.
90. Letter from Karin Walton to author, 6 June 1985. Karin Walton is also the source of information on the leather binding on sacking in England.
91. Ebenezer Kellogg, "Ebenezer Kellogg's Visit to Charleston, 1817," ed. Sydney Walter Martin, *SCHM*, vol. 49 (1948), pp. 7-8.
92. Conversation with Frank L. Horton, MESDA, September, 1985.
93. *Inventories, 1763-1769*, Robert Reid, 11 April 1764, p. 102.
94. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century*, pp. 128-129.
95. Duc de la Rochefoucault-Liancourt, *Travels Through the United States of North America in the Years 1795, 1796 and 1797* (London: 1800), vol. 2, p. 441.
96. Raymond A. Mohl, ed., "The Grand Fabric of Republicanism: A Scotsman Describes South Carolina 1810-1811," *SCHM*, vol. 71 (1970), p. 177.
97. *SCG*, 14 May 1772; *Ibid.*, 16 June 1766.
98. *SCG&CJ*, 8 July 1766.
99. *Prime*, vol. 1, p. 218.
100. *SCG*, 25 November 1756.
101. *Ibid.*, 16 June 1766.
102. *CG&DA*, 26 June 1800.
103. *South Carolina Weekly Gazette*, 6 September 1783.
104. *SCGaz&PA*, 13 October 1784.

105. J. Bryan Grimes, *North Carolina Wills and Inventories* (Raleigh: Edward & Broughton Printing Company, 1912), p. 481.
106. *Inventories*, 1810-1818, Mrs. Anne Cotingham, 8 June 1811, p. 35.
107. Charleston County, S.C., *Miscellaneous Records*, 1726-1727, Richard Woodward, 2 December 1725, pp. 122-126; *Ibid.*, Thomas Conyers, 21 December 1726, p. 416; *Ibid.*, Charles Colleton, 30 July 1728, p. 154; *Wills*, vol. 65-66, William Ramsay, July, 1733, p. 46; *Ibid.*, James Jenner, June, 1733, p. 90; *Inventories*, 1746-1748, Richard Wright, 13 May 1745, p. 164; *Ibid.*, James Mathewes, 26 February 1745, p. 243; *Ibid.*, Sarah Saxby, 18 March 1748, p. 306; *Ibid.*, Richard Hall, 25 April 1748, p. 302.
- 107a. Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1964).
108. *Miscellaneous Records*, 1726-1727, Richard Woodward, 2 December 1725, pp. 122-126; *Ibid.*, Thomas Conyers, 21 December 1726, p. 415; *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, Rebecca Axtell, 9 March 1726, p. 75; *Wills*, vol. 65-66, 1732-1737, Tweedie Somerville, 1733, p. 127; *Inventories*, 1746-1748, James Mathewes, 26 February 1745, p. 243.
109. For a detailed explanation of bed curtain and window curtain styles see Florence M. Montgomery, *Printed Textiles, English and American Cottons and Linens*, 1700-1850 (New York: Viking Press, 1970), pp. 47-82; and *Textiles in America*, pp. 15-95.
110. *Register of the Province of South Carolina*, Unit 3, 1704-1709, p. 111.
111. *Inventories*, 1732-1737, pp. 8-17.
112. *CG&DA*, 10 April 1797.
113. "Elfe," *SCHM*, vol. 39 (1938), p. 164. Elfe also made bed curtain rods of mahogany and ash for Thomas Phepoe in 1775 (*SCHM*, vol. 41 [1940], p. 153).
114. Jane Nylander, "Window Hangings," *Early American Life* (Gettysburg, Pa.: Early American Society, Inc., December, 1979), p. 42.
115. North Carolina, *Secretary of State Council Minutes, Wills and Inventories*, 1677-1701, p. 15.
116. Montgomery, *Printed Textiles*, pp. 13-37.
117. For the difference between woolens and worsteds see: Audrey H. Michie, "Charleston Textile Imports, 1738-1742," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, May, 1981), p. 27.
118. *Inventories*, vol. 88A, 1763-1767, 9 May 1764, p. 130.
- 118a. *Ibid.*, 18 May 1764, p. 211.
119. Brian J. Enright, contributor, "An Account of Charles Town in 1725," *SCHM*, vol. 61 (1960), pp. 15-17.
120. Eliza Pinckney, ed., *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney, 1739-1762* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 40.
121. Janet Shaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, ed. Evangeline Walker Andrews (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), pp. 182-183.
122. John Bartram, "Diary of a Journey Through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida, From July 1, 1765 to April 10, 1766," ed. Francis Harper, *Trans-*

actions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, December, 1942), vol. 33, p. 21. *Note:* the punctuation marks added by annotator Francis Harper in 1942 have been removed by the author.

123. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
124. "Ebenezer Kellogg's Visit," *SCHM*, vol. 49 (1948), pp. 7-8.
125. Abiel Abbott, "The Abiel Abbott Journals, A Yankee Preacher in South Carolina Society," ed. John Hammond Moore, *SCHM*, vol. 68 (1967), pp. 249-250.
126. Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves, The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 40.
127. *Wills*, vol. 65-66, 1732-1737, p. 344.
128. *Ibid.*, vol. 82A-82B, 1753-1756, p. 148.
129. *Ibid.*, vol. 65-66, 1732-1737, p. 424.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
131. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century*, p. 159.
132. *SCG*, 2 February 1765.
133. *Prime*, vol. 1, p. 208.
134. *SCG*, 21 January 1773.
135. *Charleston Morning Post, and Daily Advertiser*, 28 July 1786.
136. *Inventories*, 1793-1800, 9 January 1800, p. 449.
137. Charleston, *Strength of the People*, 23 November 1809; 25 November 1809.
138. Jane Nylander, "Bed Hangings, Part II: Field Beds," *Early American Life* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Historical Times, Inc., August, 1984), pp. 49-53.
139. Letter from Karin Walton to author, 6 June 1985.
140. Robert Pringle, *The Letterbook of Robert Pringle*, ed. Walter B. Edgar, 2 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), vol. 1, p. 224.
141. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 487.
142. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 660.
143. Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 275.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
145. Robert Shosteck, *Flowers and Plants* (New York: New York Times Book Company, 1974), p. 296. Silk grass was also used for hammocks in South Carolina.
146. *Wills.*, No. 5, 1740-1747, p. 79.
147. *SCG*, 14 June 1742.
148. *Ibid.*, 4 November 1739.
149. *Ibid.*, 14 November 1741.
150. Caffoy, explained by Florence Montgomery in *Textiles in America*, was an imitation of furnishing velvet and damask, patterned with wool pile. The name was also applied to wallpaper with flock designs. In Hutchinson's advertisement, it was probably worsted.

151. *SCG&CJ*, 7 July 1772.
152. *SCG*, 10 August 1734.
153. *Ibid.*, 18 December 1737.
154. *Virginia Gazette*, 6 April 1739.
155. *Wills*, vol. 73, 1741-1743, p. 202.
156. *SCG*, 27 March 1742.
157. Williamsburg, *Virginia Gazette* (Parks), 28 November 1745.
158. Lynn, *Wallpaper*, p. 18.
159. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
160. Incidentally, the terms used in South Carolina records for curtains were "bed curtains" and "window curtains," "furniture" for the bed ensemble, and not "hangings" except for the walls.
161. Josiah Quincy, "Journal of Josiah Quincy, Jr., 1773," *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, June, 1916, vol. XLIX, p. 445.
162. *SCG&CJ*, 6 February 1770.
163. *Charleston Courier*, 4 July 1808.
164. Charleston, *Columbian Herald*, 26 November 1793.
165. *SCG*, 28 October 1756.
166. Catherine Lynn in *Wallpaper in America* explains "flower pots for chimneys" as chimney boards decorated with vases of flowers.
167. *SCG&CJ*, 19 January 1768.
168. *SCG*, 21 May 1772.
169. Charleston, *Columbian Herald*, 17 August 1790.
170. *Prime*, vol. 2, p. 220.
171. *Ibid.*
172. *Ibid.*
173. *CG&DA*, 10 February 1795.
174. *Prime*, vol. 2, p. 220.
175. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
176. *Times*, 1 August 1806.
177. *Charleston Courier*, 15 August 1816.
178. *Ibid.*, 21 October 1818.
179. *Inventories*, vol. G., 1824-1834, pp. 339-341.
180. *SCG*, 28 July 1766.
181. *SCG*, 18 September 1762.
182. *Prime*, vol. 2, p. 220.
183. Charleston, *Carolina Gazette*, 2 January 1800.
184. *SCG&CJ*, 18 March 1766.
185. *Accounts of the Independent Congregational (Circular) Church, Charleston, South Carolina*. Records in the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, 1774-1822, five bundles, unpagged, except for one bundle.
186. *SCG*, 6 April 1765.

187. Charleston, *State Gazette of South Carolina*, 19 March 1792.
188. *Prime*, vol. 2, pp. 202-203.
189. *Accounts of the Independent Congregational (Circular) Church*, unpagged.
190. *SCG&CJ*, 19 February 1785.
191. *SCG*, 30 October, 8 November, and 13 November 1751.
192. *Wills*, No. 37, 1826-1834, 14 June 1827, p. 394.
193. *Charleston Courier*, 25 November 1822.
194. Audrey Michie, "The Fashion for Carpets in South Carolina, 1736-1820," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, May, 1982, pp. 25-48.
195. *Wills*, vol. 85B, 1758-1761, Martha Savage, 30 April 1761, p. 928.
196. *Wills*, vol. 87A, 1761-1763, p. 242.
197. *Ibid.*, vol. 87B, John Jones, 4 April 1764, p. 482.

MESDA seeks manuscripts which treat virtually any facet of southern decorative art for publication in the JOURNAL. The MESDA staff would also like to examine any privately-held primary research material (documents and manuscripts) from the South, and southern newspapers published in 1820 and earlier.

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